

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

Summer Special

17th August 2020



Tintern Abbey, one of our local Historical gems

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

NEWPORT U3A TIMETABLE

SUBJECT	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ALL THAT JAZZ		12:15 - 13:15 W3	
ART	10:00 - 12:00 W		
CAFÉ CULTURE/MONTHLY MEETING		10:00 - 12:00 W2	
CHOIR.		10:00 - 12:00 W	
CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION			13:15 - 15:15 W1,3
CRAFT			10:00 - 12:00 W
CREATIVE WRITING			13:15 - 15:15 W
CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS		14:15 - 15:30 W2,4	
CURRENT AFFAIRS	10:15 - 11:45 W 1,3,4,5		
CYCLING	Tuesdays April to October - Contact Convenor for details		
EASY MOVEMENT	12:15 - 13:30 W		
FAMILY HISTORY			13:15 - 15:15 W2,4,5
FRENCH DEBS	14:15 - 15:45 W		
FRENCH INTERMEDIATE			09:45 - 11:15 W
FRENCH LIT			09:45 - 11:15 W
FRENCH CONVERSATION			11:30 - 13:00 W
GARDENING & WILDLIFE		10:00 - 12:00 W1,3	
GERMAN		14:15 - 15:45 W2,4	
HISTORY		13:45 - 15:15 W1,3,4	
ITALIAN CONVERSATION			12:30 - 13:30
ITALIAN IMPROVERS			13:30 - 14:45 W
LINE DANCING			12:15 - 13:15 W1,3
LISTENING TO MUSIC	10:00 - 12:00 W		
MEDITATION		12:15 - 13:15 W1,3,4	
PLAY READING	14:00 - 15:30 W		
READING 1	12:00 - 13:00 W2		
READING 2	13:00 - 14:00 W2		
REMINISCENCES		13:30 - 15:00 W2	
STANDING PILATES			13:30 - 14:30 W
SKITTLES (ST JULIANS INN)			13:15 - 14:30 W2,3
SPANISH (BEGINNERS)			10:00 - 11:15 W
SPANISH (ADVANCED)			11:30 - 13:00 W
SPECIAL EVENTS, TRIPS	As advertised		
SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB	Monthly about 13:00. usually 2nd Sunday in month		
THEATRE		12:15 - 12:40 W1	
UKULELE - BEGINNERS	11:45 - 13:00 W1,3,4,5		
UKULELE - INTERMEDIATE		11:00 - 12:15 W2,3,4,5	
UKULELE - TECHNICAL		13:00 - 15:15 W1,3,4,5	
WALKS - ALL DAY	Meet 09:30 - Wednesday - Evans St. W		
WALKS - HALF DAY	Meet 09:30 - Saturday - Evans St. W		
WALKS - AMBLERS	Meet 09:45 - Saturday - High St. Outside Market W		
WELSH	14:30 - 15:30 W		
WHIST		12:15 - 14:00 W2,4	

Times are followed by frequency of meetings. A 'W' alone means weekly meetings, whereas W followed by a number indicates which week or weeks of the month that group meets. It is always advisable to contact the convenor in advance if a meeting is not held weekly – see below.

IMPORTANT – This timetable relates to meetings held when we are “up and running”. During the time that our U3A is closed, some groups may be meeting virtually where possible. For details of any such activities or for general subject enquiries, please visit our website and choose the Groups tab from the menu. Choose the group in which you are interested and click on the message icon at the top right of the page. For GENERAL (i.e. not group-specific) enquiries, please use the icon at the top of the Welcome page. Our website can be accessed at <https://u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales/home> and is well worth looking at!

View from the Chair



Those amongst you who can recall my previous two “Views from the Chair” might remember that I included a picture of a tranquil scene – sunrise (or sunset) over distant hills, viewed across a large body of water reminiscent of Scotland, the Lake District or Norway. It is one of those pictures of which I could never tire. You will see that I have changed the picture this time – this is definitely the view I have had from my chair for the past five months as it hangs on our lounge wall! It probably is as appropriate a representation as I could find for these months, during which our entire world has been in turmoil.

We started 2020 on something of a “high” – our new Beacon administration system went live on 1st January and our groups began meeting again a week later. The world news at that time mentioned the outbreak of an epidemic in China but I don’t think any of us really thought that it might impact on our lives. How wrong could we be!

Things moved along relatively quietly until early March when it became apparent that we were going to be caught up in a serious pandemic as the first UK death was recorded on 5th of that month. The committee had already started to consider our position as a U3A and we engaged with some of our convenors to gauge individual members’ reactions to the news. As a result, we closed our doors after the last classes on 13th March. We were just ten days ahead of the nation.

It was now that the value of the Beacon system became really apparent. News could be disseminated to the majority of members by email with ease - and this allowed us to start producing Desert Island Times. The first issue went out at the end of the week following closure – and the rest is, as “they” say, history!

I am acutely conscious of the hard work that our contributors have put into making this publication a success and I repeat my former thanks and praise for all of their efforts. And, of course, special praise for Gwyn Havard without whom we would not have the wealth of photographs that we are able to include – and who does the final proof-read as well!

We still don’t know exactly what the future holds but we are exploring the possibilities that technology can offer. Some groups are already “meeting” using Zoom and we hope that it might be possible to extend this facility to further groups.

If you wish to see any of the first 20 editions of Desert Island Times they are all available on our website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales/page/99375> and new editions will be added as they appear. Any changes will appear on this page, but you can also use this link to reach other pages of the website by selecting the required tab at the top.

Submitted Group reports appear in the first pages of this edition. Please use the website to find out more about our groups and make contact if you have any questions or would like to join a group. If you have a general enquiry, please visit our Welcome page and use the contact icon at the top right of the page.

Stephen J. Berry, Chairman

Our Musical Activities

It will come as no surprise to anybody that our practical music-making activities came to an abrupt halt when we closed our doors on 13th March. Our appreciation activities have managed to continue, though, and we are very thankful to all who have contributed articles and shared their “Desert Island Choices” with us via Desert Island Times.

A brief summary of our musical activities is as follows:

ALL THAT JAZZ (from the Convenor, Mike Brown)

This well established group usually meets at 12.15 on the third Thursday of the month to listen to recordings and explore all *genres* of Jazz from its roots in New Orleans to Swing, Latin and through to the Modern. In addition, each June we invite a professional quartet to come and entertain all our members.

During the Lockdown I have contributed several reviews to the e-magazine, Desert Island Times, showcasing a full spectrum of classic gems plus links for listening to them on U-tube.

It's been pleasing to receive comments from members who have enjoyed my selections.

CHOIR (from the Convenor and Musical Director, Stephen Berry)

Unfortunately our Choir is a major casualty of “lockdown” – with an average weekly attendance at rehearsal of 50 members prior to closure, it will immediately be apparent that observing social distancing of 2 metres presents major problems! Even if this could be achieved, the essence of a choir is that its members DO stand in close proximity to one another to achieve its results. We are, however, optimistic that we might be able to begin rehearsals again in the not *too* distant future – subject to Government permission of course – though we may well have to look for larger accommodation, at least in the short term.

UKELELE GROUPS

Our three Ukelele groups are also major casualties of “lockdown”, though the beginners’ group has held informal meetings in the bandstand at Belle Vue Park on Thursday mornings. **Jackie Morgan**, one of the group’s Convenors, tells me that, although their numbers are not large (which is as well, given the space available and the 2 metre rule!), when the weather is fine they attract quite an audience from other citizens who are enjoying the amenities of the park.

LISTENING TO MUSIC / CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION (from the CMA Convenor, Stephen Berry)

Both groups (which are complementary but by no means the same) have been fortunate in being able to continue via articles in “Desert Island Times” – and these probably offer readers such a wide choice of music and so many suggestions for listening that there never need be a dull moment during lockdown! I know from feedback received that many members have discovered much to like and have then been motivated to explore particular composers or *genres* for themselves. As our newest group (before lockdown at least) it is particularly unfortunate that the Classical Music Appreciation group could only meet twice before closure.

By far the majority of the material has appeared in articles written by Neil Pritchard and I for one cannot thank Neil enough for these wonderful articles. It has also been really good to have members’ individual choices for publication under the umbrella of the “Desert Island” concept. The original challenge was to submit ten titles – I failed miserably as it would be impossible for me to restrict myself to just ten pieces of music! I’m sure that all of you will have favourite pieces of music – and that these will cover a wide range of *genres* – so please do submit them so that they can be shared with everyone.

Our Language Groups

WELSH GROUP (from the Convenor, Marilyn Gregory)

The Welsh Group has been meeting online via Zoom. Some members were unable to join us for various reasons but we gained a member from Torfaen U3A. Not being very technically minded it took me a few attempts to get used to Zoom. We initially began as a conversation group to practice our Welsh but we have now evolved into a Basic Welsh Class. We meet twice a week for 40 minutes each time. Sue Tidley kindly volunteered to lead it. Sue is a great help to me in running the normal Welsh Class at Shaftesbury Street.

Sue told us about an Online Welsh Summer School organised by Coleg Gwent in July. Lessons were held on three days for four hours a day (with an hour for lunch). There were several levels and it was free. Some of us signed up to this and it has subsequently inspired us to sign up for courses starting in the Autumn. These start online but hopefully will continue at various educational centres early next year. Coleg Gwent offered an incentive of "half price" if people enrolled before 31st July!

I hope that we will still have a U3A Class when we eventually return to Shaftesbury Street – whenever that may be.

Sadly, one of our members, Rob James, lost his wife very recently though not due to the virus. Our group sent our condolences to Rob and his family.

FRENCH GROUPS (from Barbara Phillips)

I am delighted to say that the Debs carried on for the first several weeks like real troopers. I would send them bits of French text to translate and we went on from there. Not all the Debs have email, so Royal Mail benefitted too.

If is perhaps unfortunate, from their point of view anyway, that they don't really appreciate my sort of books, (I have all the Harry Potters in French!) but after a few false starts we soldiered on and eventually completed the first chapter of *Orgueil et Préjugés*. The first line in English reads "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." I'll leave you to work out the book. We learned vocabulary and grammar, a little about Victorian tastes and habits, and if some of us used Google Translate or similar, we still learned something. I can't say I understand, even now, why a married couple with several children call each other Mr and Mrs, even when alone. It must have been a rousing courtship!

Our future plans are a bit more hi-tech, as we are hoping to use virtual meetings to carry on after September. I am lucky that some of the Debs have been using the technology to keep in touch with friends and family during the lockdown and they are willing to help with the tricky stuff, like sending out meeting invitations, and generally providing a shoulder for me to cry on when I want to throw the laptop out the window!

We have acquired one new member to the group, at the moment remaining socially distanced in every sense, but we look forward to putting a face to the name shortly. If anyone else would like to join the Debs you will be made very welcome, either Virtually or in person.

Our other three French groups (Intermediate, Conversation and Literature) have not met so far but Convenors are looking at the possibility of doing so (via Zoom, possibly) in the future. However we are all looking forward to the time when we can enjoy both the learning and sociability of our regular meetings!

The History Group (from Rob Wilkinson and Derek Nash)

This has been one of the most frustrating periods for all of us. We have had to cancel or postpone 14 speakers and may have to rearrange more in the Autumn Term. Things started so well back in January.... our first speaker was the eloquent Lionel Elton, a Jewish gent from Abergavenny, whose family had suffered much in Eastern Europe. He himself had an unsettled childhood, with many beatings at school. Salvation came through music, especially the clarinet, which he played beautifully for us, and through teaching which he continues to do, even though he is now well over 70. Later in January we heard from Anne Hayward. She is a mature lady who decided that she needed to walk around Wales visiting key religious places, like St. David's, St. Asaph and Ynys Mon. In 3 months she walked over 650 miles, camping at night. She had the occasional awkward moment, but overall she thought most people were kind, helpful and generous. I know now that she is on the Isle of Wight, making for more religious sites in Brittany.

In February we met up with Don Balkwill, a Cornishman with a love of unusual and strange objects. He brought 20 with him and I think I identified 2 ! But others were a little better and Don was certainly engaging and lively. Later, we had a talk on Patagonia from David Barter. This was a very long and detailed account of the founding and development of the Welsh settlement in Argentina. David and his wife had learnt some Welsh and had visited the outpost in 2018, so he was very enthusiastic. Following this, for the first time ever, was an event called Members' Short Talks. Five kind people volunteered to tell us something about their lives; they were Jan Howell, John Smith, Alan Barrow, Derek Nash and Rob Wilkinson. Jan entertained us with reflections on how teaching methods and ideas had changed throughout her career, whilst John spoke movingly about his career and illness. Derek recalled his experiences of being in charge of some elections locally and how people could misunderstand simple instructions. He also mentioned the vagaries of the election system in that somebody putting a tick against a name would have their vote counted, but if they added "He's OK", the ballot would be regarded as spoiled! I gave a resume of the ups and downs of my life, with the highlight for me being Captain of Goldington Green Primary football team at the age of 11 ! Alan was the wittiest and most expressive speaker, telling us about his adventures in Skewen, near Swansea, and of his love and affection for his wife, now sadly no longer with us.

The dreaded Covid 19 then struck before the end of the Spring Term and we were forced to cancel 3 talks: Chris Winner on the History of Liverpool, Bill Fouweather on the last of the Russian kings, Nicholas II, and John Sheen on "Five Boys and a Pasty", which I think would have completed the Easter Term with a good dollop of humour. The entire Summer Term has been wiped out, but we will do our best to reorganise as many as possible; at the moment we are fully booked until February 2021. These are some topics that may appear in the next few months: The Newport Ship, Life in Uganda, Angels in Wartime, Irish Immigration into South Wales, The Battle of Britain, Servants at Tredegar House and more Members' talks. Thank you for your forbearance; this has been a very trying time and I really hope that some kind of normality will return soon.

Look to the future, respect the past.

Although the History Group has missed its regular meetings our readers will find that past weekly editions of Desert Island Times have included several articles on subjects which might well have been presented at our formal meetings. Although these cannot compare with "live" performances, not the least because the question-and-answer sessions at the end always generate additional information from our members as well as our speakers, at least we have managed to sustain members' interest in History and Reminiscences. Thanks to all who have contributed on such a wide variety of historical topics.

Creative Writing Group (from Pam Cocchiara)

The writing group is thriving despite the difficulties imposed by the lockdown.

We are still meeting each week on a Friday, between 1pm and 3.30pm albeit through the medium of Zoom, when we spend an enjoyable session developing our writing skills.

Over the last few weeks we've written on a wide variety of subjects suggested by members, whether we prefer to write prose or poetry and whether the theme is dramatic, tragic or maybe comical.

We are a very friendly group and welcome anyone who wishes to join us.

Craft Group (from Ros Lee)

Before Lockdown, I initiated our themed project for 2020. I found some patterns for it and also made some models to show the scale of the project and other figures, plus some illustrated examples. As always, we will be keeping our project under wraps.

Each of us is making an individual representation of the theme, which will come together to form a complete display.

It was good that we had a couple of months to discuss and start our projects before Lockdown came along.

We have a lot of expert knitters in the Group and they love the challenge of starting another project.

Everyone has been busy they say, working on the project with different aspects of it and it promises to be a lovely display.

Hopefully next year we can showcase our project at Open Event.

Some craft members have also been making PPE for the NHS. Others have been carrying on their charity knitting and selling cards for various charities.

I've also been working on the project for 2022, while we were at home, and have it ready with the patterns and measurements of each item. It's never too soon to start thinking about another project!

Line Dancing Group (from Lorna Hughes and George Williams)

Sadly we have been unable to meet due to the Lockdown. However to compensate when U3A re-opens we plan to increase our Group sessions from twice a month to three times a month i.e. W1, 2 and 3.

Keep Safe!

Cryptic Crossword Group (from Angela Robins)

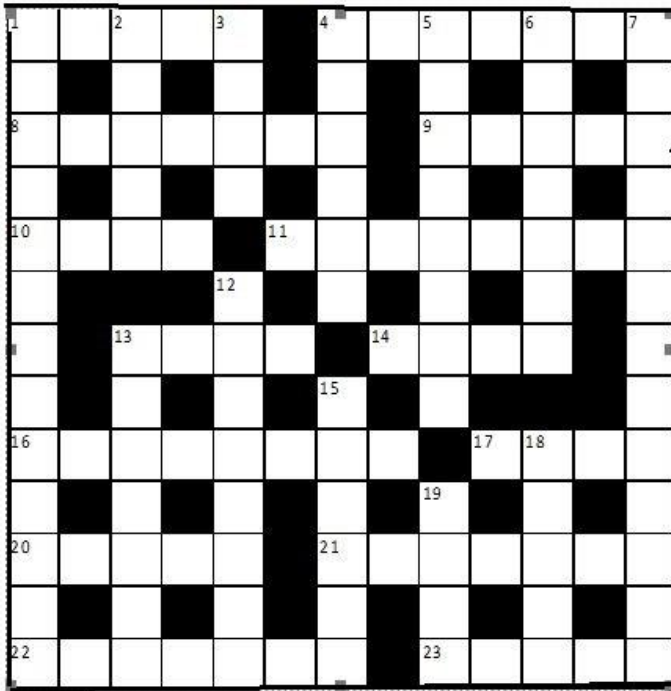
The How to Solve Cryptic Crosswords Group usually meets at 2.15 on 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. During Lockdown I have been sending one easy crossword each week to members of my group by e-mail. Midweek I send hints for each clue and later on the answers.

This has kept me in touch with my members who correspond regularly about their efforts.

In addition I have compiled a weekly article to be included in the e-magazine - Desert Island Times. There are a dozen types of Cryptic Crossword Clues and each of my brain-fizzing sessions unlocks those fiendish clues. They are followed by twenty clues to be solved plus the answers. I am now mid-way through explaining the more difficult mixed clues, again with examples to be solved.

I was really pleased to receive emails from other members of our U3A requesting my weekly puzzle. Having read my articles gave them a 'Eureka!' moment and they felt able to attempt them.

Try this one for yourself!



Across

1. From the kerb I pedalled furiously with two feet! (5)
4. Put two points in the wood, I beg of you! (7)
8. Action of yachtsman, carpenter or needlewoman (7)
9. Due to go back about the victory.... (5)
10. which was not difficult (4)
11. to go back having only a share of the points! (8)
13. & 14. Singer in front of 500 with peculiar percussion instrument (4,4)
16. Colin has altered – he’s a different man! (8)
17. The disparagement in his lurid descriptions(4)
20. Extinct volcano shouldn’t.... (5)
21. you could have such a meal at the summit! (4,3)
22. The sort of chance a thin person has of putting on weight? (7)
23. To us, the Athenian newspaper may be all! (5)

Down

1. If there’s a catch in it, he is unlikely to! (13)
2. Makes a choice of pointed instruments (5)
3. If 15 notices one, he may need a new 15! (4)
4. Worn by a huge bald V.I.P.? (6)
5. Conceals one of the family aboard ship (8)
6. Saying with point – point to two animals (7)
7. Above which the bank may be broken! (4,5,4)
12. How star does like some chocolates! (8)
13. Exist with reason, and start to say why (7)
15. Cleaner girl in conflict (6)
18. Supple, but a bit of a blithering idiot! (5)
19. Eager for past note, perhaps (4)

Hints to help you solve these Cryptic Crossword Clues:

Across

1. Hidden Word.
4. A-Z Association/Word Exchange.
8. Triple Definition.
9. Reverse/ Word Exchange.
10. Punctuation
11. Double Definition.
- 13&14. Numbers/Word Exchange
16. Anagram.
17. Hidden Word.
20. Punctuation.
21. Pure Cryptic.
22. Pure Cryptic.
23. Cryptic (adage).

Down

1. Pure Cryptic
2. Double Definition
3. Cryptic/other clue
4. Pure Cryptic
5. A-Z Abbreviation/Word Exchange
6. A-Z Association/Word Exchange
7. Pure Cryptic
12. Anagram
13. Word Exchanges
15. Word Exchanges
18. Hidden Word
19. Word Exchange/A-Z Association

Answers are on page 23

THE MAGIC OF THE MUSICAL by Neil Pritchard

I am a great fan of musical shows and I'd like to share my enthusiasm for them with you. I'll be looking at how musicals came about in the first place, and how they developed into one of the most popular and enduring forms of music. It's always debatable which musicals are the greatest, so I'm going to "grasp the nettle" and choose my personal Top Ten great musicals - see whether you agree? The 60 years from the 1920s to the 1980s are undoubtedly the period when musicals were breaking new ground and I'm going to look at the landmarks, as I see them, in the evolution of the musical.

Let's start with what it is about musicals that appeals to so many different people. As I see it there are four main reasons for their popularity:

1. They Teach History

A lot of the current popular musicals you can see are based on historical events e.g. Hamilton and Les Miserables. Others may be based on characters or figures from the past. For the most part, the vast majority of them remain true to the facts or original story. Unlike some learning though, this will be engaging, entertaining and fun. Before you even know it, the show will be over and you will have learned about something great from the past.

2. Musicals Tackle Social and Political Issues

Anyone who wants to watch social and political issues being tackled, sometimes in a light-hearted way, at other times with a degree of seriousness, should watch a musical. Broadway or West End shows generally take on social and political issues, without being too controversial. The majority of musicals will engage you in the story, without being too biased or insensitive. West Side Story, Cabaret and Rent are typical examples.

3. They Engross You in the Story

Musicals have a way of immersing you in the story right away. The costumes, songs, dialogue, music, sets, choreography, lighting and cast, will grab your attention. And they will keep you on the edge of your seat until it's over. It's like taking a magical ride to another dimension. Once the show is finished, you will wonder why it ended so quickly. Oliver, South Pacific and Into the Woods come to mind.

4. The Dancing and Singing are Awesome

Watching a perfectly choreographed group of people dance and sing in a musical show is like nothing else. The singing and dancing in shows are two of the best parts of the event. Once you begin to watch these wonderful and entertaining numbers play out, you will want to jump out of your seat. The music will engage you, and the dancing will hopefully captivate you as well. Again - West Side Story, Chicago and An American in Paris are the tops.

Safe to say some of these musicals such as my personal favourite - West Side Story - have all four features.

Here's an example that illustrates some of these features, from the first musical to achieve universal appeal back in the 1920s - Showboat. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdCxxhQpWLMQ>

How did musical theatre / musicals come about in the first place, and how did they develop from other musical forms to the point where Showboat appeared on the stage? Where to begin? Let go back to the 18th century. The first musical theatre performance was in America and took place in 1735, before the United States was even technically a country. Flora, an English opera, was performed in both America and Europe. After the United States became a nation, Burlesque - a new type of musical theatre known for its fancy costumes and large dance numbers - became popular. Burlesque shows were mostly parodies, or imitations used to make fun of famous people or plays. Modern musical theatre began in the mid-to-late 1800s, the result of major social and technical changes. Transportation was improving, so it was easier for people to travel to theatres. Better jobs and better salaries meant people had more money to spend on

entertainment. The invention of electricity led to street lights, which made it safer for people to go out at night. The Black Crook was the first modern musical and was performed in New York, in 1866. It was five and a half hours long and ran for 474 performances. The audience must have had great stamina!

Meanwhile in England and France comic opera was taking off in a big way in the shape of Gilbert and Sullivan and Jacques Offenbach. In England, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan created an English answer to French operetta - British comic opera. These became family-friendly hits in Britain and America in the 1870s and 1880s. Although British and American musicals of the 1890s and the first few years of the twentieth century had virtually swept operetta and comic opera from the stage, operettas returned to the London and Broadway stages in 1907. Operettas and musicals became direct competitors for a while. The winner of this competition was the theatre going public, who needed escapist entertainment during the dark times of World War I, and who flocked to theatres for musicals like *Maid of the Mountains* and *Irene*. However, the legacy of the operetta composers continued to serve as an inspiration to the next generation of composers of operettas and musicals in the 1920s and 1930s, such as Irving Berlin, Sigmund Romberg, George Gershwin, and Noel Coward.

By the end of the 1920s, motion pictures like *The Jazz Singer* could be presented with sound (silent cinema became a thing of the past), and critics wondered if the cinema would replace live theatre altogether? Thankfully this didn't happen. The musicals of the Roaring Twenties, borrowing from vaudeville, music hall, and other light entertainments, tended to ignore the plot in favour of emphasising star actors and actresses, big dance routines, and popular songs. Typical of the decade were light-hearted productions like *Lady Be Good*; *No, No, Nanette*; and *Funny Face*. Audiences attended these musicals on both sides of the Atlantic while continuing to go to the popular operettas that were continuing to come out of continental Europe.

Show Boat, which premiered on December 27, 1927 at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York, took a giant step beyond the sentimental operetta. The show represented a complete integration of book and score, with dramatic themes woven seamlessly together. *Show Boat*, with a book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II and P. G. Wodehouse, and music by Jerome Kern, presented a new concept that was embraced by audiences immediately. Despite some of its startling themes—interracial love among them—the original production ran a total of 572 performances. Encouraged by the success of *Show Boat*, creative teams began following the format of that popular hit. Gershwin produced some of the most popular musicals of the decade including *Top Hat*, *Oh, Kay!* *Funny Face* and *Shall we Dance*. One of my personal favourites is *Shall we Dance*. Let's Call The Whole Thing Off from the show is brilliant:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOILZ_D3aRg

What an amazing and original dance routine, and on roller skates - amazing! The Great Depression of the 1930s affected theatre audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, as people had little money to spend on entertainment. Only a few shows exceeded a run on Broadway or in London of 500 performances. Still, for those who could afford it, this was an exciting time in the development of musical theatre. The musical had finally evolved beyond the gags-and-showgirls musicals of the Gay Nineties and Roaring Twenties. The 1940s ushered in The Golden Age of the Broadway musical. One of the major figures in musicals at this time was Irving Berlin. George Gershwin said that he was "The greatest songwriter who has ever lived". In his lifetime he wrote over 1500 songs which is in itself quite incredible. His life spanned more than 100 years, he died in 1989 at the age of 101. He was born Israel Beilin on May 11, 1888. One of eight children, his exact place of birth is unknown, although his family had been living in Byelorussia (in Eastern Europe) when they immigrated to New York in 1893. When his father died, Berlin had just turned 13, he took to the streets in various odd jobs, working as a busker singing for pennies, then as a singing waiter in a Chinatown Cafe. In 1907 he published his first song, "Marie from Sunny Italy" and by 1911 he had his first major international hit "Alexander's Ragtime Band".

Over the next six decades, Irving Berlin produced a huge number of ballads, dance numbers, novelty tunes and love songs that defined American popular song for much of the century. They included "How Deep Is The Ocean," "Blue Skies," "White Christmas," "Anything You Can Do," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Cheek To Cheek," "Puttin' On The Ritz" and "God Bless America." He was equally at home writing for Broadway and Hollywood. He wrote seventeen complete scores for Broadway musicals and revues and contributed material for six more. Among the shows featuring all-Berlin scores were *This Is The Army*, *Miss Liberty*, *Mr. President*, *Call Me Madam* and the phenomenally successful *Annie Get Your Gun*. During his six-decade career, from 1907 to 1966, he produced sheet music, Broadway shows, recordings, and scores played on radio, in films and on television, and his tunes continue to evoke powerful emotions for millions around the world. At his 100th-birthday celebration in May 1988, violinist Isaac Stern said, "The career of Irving Berlin and American music were intertwined forever. American music was born at his piano". Here's an example from 1950:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LAijDQ2cIE>

Next I'm going to look at the pioneers of the modern musical - Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. They had known each other since they worked on varsity shows at Columbia University. They set out to prove that a "lyrics first" approach would make it easier to integrate songs into a storyline. Gilbert and Sullivan had done this long before, but in 1943 it was considered a daring idea for Broadway songwriters. Rodgers and Hammerstein wanted to do something that hadn't been tried before. They were drawn to an unsuccessful play "Green Grow the Lilacs". They thought it needed something other than the standard musical comedy treatment. The plot involved an Oklahoma Territory farm girl of the early 1900s (Laurie) deciding whether she will go to a dance with the farmhand she fears (Judd) or the cowboy she loves (Curly). This story takes a jarring turn when Judd proves to be a psychopathic murderer who Curly is forced to kill in self-defence. Murder in a musical, that could be a move to far! Another sticking point was that Hollywood had turned singing cowboys into a cliché. Could this story work on Broadway?

They began with a painstaking assessment of what made the characters tick, where songs would fit and what the style and content of each number should be. They also visualised possibilities for casting, set design, lighting and staging. Once they had agreed on these points, each of them headed home: Rodgers to his farm in upstate New York, Hammerstein to his farm in Pennsylvania. Oscar fashioned the book and lyrics with great care, labouring for weeks over certain phrases and rhymes. He then phoned in the results to Rodgers, who had been mulling over melodies and would sometimes have a completed tune on paper in a matter of minutes. Because the Guild Theatre was bankrupt, its managers gave Rodgers and Hammerstein extraordinary creative control over the project. With little to lose, R&H took several artistic risks. Instead of opening with the usual ensemble number, the curtain would rise on a farm woman churning butter as a cowboy enters singing a solo about the beauty of the morning. Hammerstein's lyrics were in a conversational style, each custom designed to fit specific characters and situations.

Despite strong comic material ("I Can't Say No") and a healthy dose of romance ("People Will Say We're In Love", "Out of My Dreams") this show was neither a typical musical comedy nor an operetta. This was something new, a fully rounded musical play, with every element dedicated to moving the story forward. At the first performance the house was not sold out – with no known stars in the cast, it was difficult even to give seats away. Those who did attend found themselves cheering a surprise hit.

A critic said "They were roaring. They were howling. People hadn't seen boys and girls dance like this for so long. Of course, they had been dancing like this, but just not where the audience could see them!" The reviews were almost unanimous raves, and long lines formed at the box office the next morning. Wartime audiences embraced this reassuring, all-American show. *Oklahoma* became a cultural phenomenon, setting a new long-run record for Broadway musicals. It also ran for three years in London, toured the U.S. for seven years and made millions of dollars. By the time the original run ended, backers saw an astounding 2,500% return on their investment. Before *Oklahoma*, Broadway composers and lyricists were

songwriters. After Oklahoma, they had to be dramatists, using everything in the score to develop character and advance the action.

Here's a number I think you'll know: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIG_GVE-KiE

The day after Oklahoma! opened, no one realised that a new age had dawned on Broadway. But it soon became apparent that standards had changed, and that the slap-dash musical comedies of the past were no longer acceptable. Others soon tried to follow in Rodgers and Hammerstein's footsteps. Building musical comedies with some serious undertones, adding sophisticated dance and integrating every element into the storytelling process – how hard could it be? As it turned out, it could be damned hard. The earliest competing musicals were fascinating but have not enjoyed the lasting popularity that marks the best R&H shows. On The Town in 1944 (463 performances) used modern dance and song to depict the romantic adventures of three sailors on shore leave in New York. It was created by a team of remarkable newcomers: score by Leonard Bernstein, book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green and choreography by Jerome Robbins. The show and its much-revised MGM film version did well, but the material soon seemed dated.

However with the advent of the 1950s there were many outstanding musicals that caught the public imagination at a time when radio, TV, films and Rock and Roll were competing for people's attention. These included Guys and Dolls, The King and I, My Fair Lady, Kismet and The Sound of Music, amongst many others. But the one musical that made a lasting impression on the public, far beyond the regular audience for musicals, was West Side Story. This is one of the truly great musicals, and it had an influence on the world of musicals unlike any other work in the history of musical theatre. The collaboration of composer Leonard Bernstein and lyricist Stephen Sondheim proved to be a winner. The charismatic and multi-talented Leonard Bernstein was the only principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic to compose for the Broadway stage, so it is not surprising that he created some of the most ambitious musical theatre scores of his time. His blending of classical, pop and jazz styles so distinctly invoked New York, that his three hit musicals (On the Town, Wonderful Town and West Side Story) were all set in that city.

Leonard Bernstein composed West Side Story in 1957 in collaboration with Stephen Sondheim, director / choreographer Jerome Robbins and librettist Arthur Laurents. Inspired by Shakespeare it sets a Polish-American Romeo and a Puerto Rican Juliet in the middle of a New York City street gang war. This show combines glorious music, a fine libretto and unforgettable dancing. Bernstein's melodies had a tremendous vitality that gave the score instant appeal. "Maria" and "Somewhere" soared with operatic grandeur, "Dance at the Gym" was a jazz explosion, "America" had an irresistible Latin sound, and "Gee Officer Krupke" was a variation on classic vaudeville. Revived successfully on Broadway in 1980 and 2009, West Side Story remains one of the most popular musicals of all time. The film version proved to be a massive hit when it was released in 1960. One number that combines great singing, dancing and insights into American society then (and now?) is "America". It's absolutely stunning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2igZexpMs>

And so on to the Sixties and that rare phenomena a British Musical. Few British musicals made an impact with wider audiences before the 1960s - musicals were an American Institution. While the 1960s saw the Beatles conquer the pop music world with their British brand of Rock and Roll, the London stage more or less remained in a creative slump that had plagued it since the end of World War II. Only three British musicals achieved international success during this decade, thanks to fresh writing and several electrifying performers – gradually things were beginning slowly to change. The three were:

- Stop the World I Want to Get Off (from 1961 - 485 performances) Co-written by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley.
- Songwriter David Henecker's Half a Sixpence (from 1963 - 677 performances). This is rarely seen today, but it's a charming tale of an Edwardian clerk who inherits and loses a fortune. It made Tommy Steele London's top musical comedy star.
- Lionel Bart's international hit Oliver!

When *Oliver!* had its first performance in the West End in 1960 it created a sensation with a staggering 2816 performances. Here was the first British musical to pull in the crowds and to make a major impact on the international stage. As I'm sure you are aware it was subsequently made into a popular and successful film in 1966. It delivered a heartfelt libretto and glorious score (including "Consider Yourself," "Where is Love," "Oom-Pah-Pah," "As Long As He Needs Me") by newcomer Lionel Bart. *Oliver!* stressed the lighter elements in Charles Dickens novel, *Oliver Twist*. Ron Moody as Fagin and Georgia Brown as Nancy left critics and audiences cheering. Brown repeated her role on Broadway in 1963, where there were 744 performances. Six years later, Moody starred in a superb film version that won the Oscar for Best Picture. It was the most vibrant and dynamic British book musical since the days of Gilbert and Sullivan. Often revived, it still remains a worldwide favourite. What to choose from this great musical? Well what better than this? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VogHwP0C5VY>

Ron Moody is everybody's favourite Fagin! There have been a fair number of fine actors over the years who have given this role a go, but every time I think of this film it's both Ron Moody and Oliver Reed (as Bill Sykes) who come out tops. Back to the US, in 1966, for the next major landmark in the history of the musical - *Cabaret*. The premise, if you don't know it, of this classic musical is easy enough to follow. It starts off as pure boy-meets-girl. Aspiring novelist Clifford Bradshaw arrives in Berlin in the early 1930s with his typewriter and chronic writer's block. While taking in the sights at the racy Kit Kat Klub—an emblem of the utter decadence of the era—he meets Sally. They fall madly in love and spend far too much time hopping from party to party, before various romantic and sexual complications begin to rain down on them.

What's most disturbing about the show is that *Cabaret* shows how politicians in 1930s Germany used the same tactics as politicians in America in recent years. The Germans saw their country in economic and political trouble, due to crippling war debts from World War I and a deadlocked parliament. The Nazis decided that they had to find a scapegoat on which to pin Germany's troubles. Their plan was to scare ordinary Germans with descriptions of rampant immorality and decadence so that the people would vote for the Nazis in hopes that the Nazis would return Germany to the Good Ol' Days.

The political activism in the United States when *Cabaret* hit the stage in 1966; its growth by 1972 when the film hit cinemas; as well as producer Hal Prince's desire to break through to a new kind of socially responsible musical theatre; all conspired to make *Cabaret* one of the most fascinating stage musicals of the 1960s. It's also a show that still has a lot of relevance in our world today, more now than at any time since it first opened, as evidenced by the recent smash hit Broadway revival. The singer Sally Bowles represents the people who kept their eyes shut to changes in the world around them, and the novelist Clifford Bradshaw represents the new (perhaps naïve) breed of American activist who could no longer sit by and watch the government ignore the will of the people.

Here's a excerpt from the film musical which uses very clever lyrics to illustrate the power of money:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8P80A8vy9I>

Before the 60s the British musical was very much a homegrown affair catering for a specific local market. Then in the 60s a new duo, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, arrived on the musical scene in this country and made an impact on musicals that would last for over 20 years. Lloyd Webber studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, and at the Royal College of Music. While a student, he began collaborating with Tim Rice on dramatic productions, Rice writing the lyrics and Lloyd Webber the music. Their first notable venture was *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in 1968. It was followed by the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, an extremely popular though controversial work that blended classical forms with rock music to tell the story of Jesus' life. That show became the longest-running musical in British theatrical history. Lloyd Webber's last major collaboration with Rice was *Evita* (1978), a musical about Eva Perón, wife of the Argentine dictator Juan Perón.

In his next major musical *Cats*, in 1981, Lloyd Webber set to music verses from a children's book by T.S. Eliot. In 1989 the London production of *Cats* surpassed *Jesus Christ Superstar* as the longest-running British production of a musical. Webber experienced nearly the same level of commercial success with *Starlight Express* in 1984 (lyrics by Richard Stilgoe), in which performers notoriously donned roller skates to portray toy trains; the show ran in London for more than 17 years. He then composed *The Phantom of the Opera* in 1986 (filmed in 2004), a hugely popular musical version of a melodramatic novel. Two years after winning the Olivier Award for best musical, the show opened on Broadway and won best musical at the Tony Awards. In 2006 it surpassed *Cats* to become the longest-running Broadway show. (*Phantom* was due to be performed at the Millennium Centre shortly after Christmas this year and we were looking forward to a family day out, but unfortunately, as you might imagine, it's been cancelled along with four other musicals we had bookings for).

Over the years Lloyd Webber has received a lot of hostility, from certain quarters, due to the immense popularity of his musicals. I think a lot of it can be put down to snobbery: the curious British belief that anything truly popular can't really be any good. Looking at his career over a long span, I'd also say he deserves credit both for his careful stewardship of the theatres he owns, and for taking the British musical out of its cosy backwater, by choosing a range of unlikely subjects that have sent his works spinning round the globe. You don't have to like all his shows – I could cheerfully live without seeing *Starlight Express* – but post-war British theatre without him would have been a duller place.

Cats has been cited as an example of a musical that directly appeals to both adults and children and a great way of enjoying a family get together. (My two daughters were very fortunate to go to a secondary school where the music department arranged a number of visits over the years to West End Shows, including "*Cats*"). Based on T.S. Eliot's whimsical collection of poems, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's popular musical brings together a tribe of Jellicle Cats on a moonlit evening, who must make the "Jellicle choice" to decide which of them will ascend to the mysterious Heaviside Layer to be reborn. *Cats* was an international phenomenon and its original production is still the fourth-longest-running show on Broadway. It was revived there in summer 2016. A magical, moving, and often hilarious glimpse into the lives of others, *Cats* takes Eliot's lyrical poetry and puts it into the mouths of a diverse company of singing, dancing cats. One of my favourite songs from the musical is "Memory". It's sung here in a moving performance by Elaine Page. Am I wrong in supposing that the lyrics send a message of hope in today's world. With nearly six million viewings of this video, I suspect a lot of others may think so too.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gd_ohoPzYc

In the early 1970s a major figure in the history of the musical, Stephen Sondheim, had revolutionised the way we saw musicals. The musicals that Sondheim and his various collaborators offered in the early 1970s re-energised the Broadway musical, setting it on a soul-searching course that redefined the whole idea of what was meant by a musical. Sondheim back in 1986 decided to approach the world of children's fairy tales, but with a twist all of his own. The resulting musical "*Into the Woods*" opened on November 5th 1987 (with a bang!) at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway, where it remained until it closed two years later after playing 764 performances. A work of fun and games and musical conjuring tricks, the show dealt with some familiar characters – the Baker and his wife, Cinderella and her Prince, Little Red Riding-Hood, Rapunzel and her Prince, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, who all found themselves threatened when the wife of the Giant came down the beanstalk to seek revenge for the death of her husband. The cast, led by Bernadette Peters as the Witch, did a fantastic job and brought to life some of the gorgeous tunes he had written for this occasion. The prologue from the original cast recording brilliantly sets the scene for what's to come in this wonderful performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGfSYEVKyx4>

From the mid-1980s to the present day British musicals have flown across the Atlantic season after season like an invading force. The "Brit hits" of this decade were all brand new. Relying on pop rhythms, stage hydraulics and high-tech special effects, these shows came to be known as mega-musicals. In these mega

musicals, substance took a backseat to spectacle, and occasional hints of humour were buried in oceans of soap opera sentiment. Although these tech-heavy presentations came with a high price tag, the best mega-musicals ran for decades, selling tickets to millions of people, particularly tourists who had long since fallen out of the habit of going to the theatre. To give you some idea how phenomenally successful theatres have been (in large part due to musicals) here are some statistics from 2018:

- Theatres attracted a combined audience of over 34 million and ticket revenue of nearly £1.28 billion, from a total of 62,945 performances in the West End and across the UK.
- London's West End theatres drew in audiences of over 15.5 million last year, resulting in box office revenue of over £765m – both record figures, generating over £127m in VAT for the Treasury. 2018 saw an increase in the number of performances to 18,708. Hit shows including Hamilton had an impact on overall ticket sales in a very strong year for musicals, while plays experienced a dip in attendances and revenue.
- Audiences for theatres across the rest of the country topped 18.8 million, with a box office of over £509m. Theatres reported a slight increase in attendances, and also number of performances (44,237) as well as a rise in income.

With regard to British and French mega-musicals few people realised that they were direct "pop-flavoured" descendants of a form thought long-dead - operetta or light opera as it is often known. It was no accident that these shows almost always replaced their pop-voiced original casts with singers who had a more operatic background. This was the case even as far back as West Side Story - think of the demands the song "Maria" places on the voice, for example. No one other than those with an operatic background could deliver such sweeping melodies and gushing emotions eight times a week. The mega-musical to beat all others is Les Miserables, the world's longest running musical. It continues its astounding success into its 35th year, confounding the British critics who dismissed it when it first opened. Les Mis (as it's affectionately known) and The Lion King are the most financially successful productions in the history of the West End. Les Mis has been performed in 52 countries and 22 languages and won over 100 international awards. The combined audience for the show and the Academy Award winning film is over 120 million people. The film is one of the 10 biggest movie musical box office successes of all time.

The French team of Claude-Michel Schonberg & Alain Boubil first offered their musical version of Victor Hugo's epic novel Les Miserables as a recording, then as a Parisian stage spectacle, with a sung-through score that sounded like a pop version of grand opera. British producer Cameron Mackintosh became involved, teaming with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Cats director Trevor Nunn to transform it into an international sensation. Mackintosh brought Les Miserables to the West End in 1985 and to Broadway in 1987 where it went on to reach a record 6,680 performances. The English translation was no work of art, but the strong plot and hydraulic sets wowed theatre goers. The logo, with little, bedraggled Cosette set against the French tri-colour, became familiar on every imaginable sort of souvenir.

Les Miserables was the first mega-musical with any dramatic merit and having seen both the film and the stage version I must admit I was blown away. Here's a brief storyline: It's about Jean Valjean, a former convict who spends a lifetime seeking redemption. Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France and the aftermath of the French Revolution, this timeless story of intertwined destinies reveals the power of compassion and the evils of indifference to human suffering. As Valjean's quest for a new life carries him into Paris and to the barricades of the Student Revolution, he is hunted by Inspector Javert and the ghosts of his past. Amidst a battle for the soul of Paris, he discovers the true meaning of love and salvation. Performed with a lush, swelling score that features such famed songs as "I Dreamed a Dream," "On My Own," and "Bring Him Home," Les Mis brings Victor Hugo's revolutionary novel blazingly to life.

I've chosen the final scene which is powerful and emotional and brings tears to my eyes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88T3elu2wfE>

For those of us who are into musicals, and for any of you who would like to sample their delights for the first time, let's hope that we can renew the pleasures that they bring in the not too distant future. We live in hope!

Newport's Love Affair with the Arcon Mk V by Stephen Berry

Like many love affairs, this one had its origins in the second world war. It was not a hole-in-the-corner affair, conducted as a brief encounter under the station timepiece, but a genuine answer to a serious problem.

The start of it can be tracked to Sunday 26th March 1944, but the seeds had been sown years – and, indeed, decades before this. At the end of the first world war there was desperate shortage of housing, leading to overcrowding in many properties which nowadays would be described as houses of multiple occupation, though there were no effective legal protections for the occupants as there are now. There was an anticipation that, following the cessation of war in 1918, there would be a wonderful new world, and an implied part of this expectation was that there would be far better housing for the many. There certainly was an increase in building, though much of it would be described as “middle-class” housing. A notable exception to this in Newport was Somerton Garden City with its cottage-style housing laid out in a pleasant estate with tree-lined roads running through it. The various styles of houses were repeated elsewhere in the town, notably at the foot of St Julian's Road and the roads heading off it and Christchurch Road. These were council-owned and were luxurious compared with the accommodation that their inhabitants had previously “enjoyed” in shared houses. Each had an inside bathroom and toilet and at least a living room, kitchen and three bedrooms. Additionally there were sizeable front and rear gardens.

Even so, demand outstripped supply and at various places around the town a number of very primitive dwellings sprang up. Almost anything useable was pressed into service – old railway coach bodies were converted and shanty-towns of corrugated iron sheet huts were created. These often occupied any piece of spare land, but two notorious sites were to be found on the side of Lady Hill (above where Alway Primary School now stands) and Brook's Field between Barthropp Street and Corporation Road; the second of these was particularly notorious for its lawlessness and insanitary conditions and was cleared away by the early 1930s. The general economic conditions of the 1920s and early 1930s did nothing to help the situation and there was still a severe housing shortage in Newport at the start of the second world war in 1939.

Enter Winston Churchill! As the war progressed, it became obvious by 1944 that things were swinging in favour of the allies and that it was only a matter of time before Germany was defeated. He, as leader of the National Government, realised that planning was necessary for the time when things returned to normal (does that remind you of anything?) The pre-war housing shortage was exacerbated by the losses from bombing which, although it was not such a problem in Newport, was particularly so in the major industrial cities which had been prime targets in bombing raids. His speech made on 26th March 1944 acknowledged the problem and launched a project for the provision of prefabricated temporary housing which could be delivered in parts and assembled quickly.

And so back to Newport. It has already been said that Newport did not suffer greatly from bombing raids in WW2, certainly not when compared alongside such places as Swansea, Bristol and Plymouth. However, its population was increasing at a very rapid rate. In 1931 it stood at 89,000; in 1951 it was 105,000. In part this was because it expanded in 1935 to include Malpas and parts of Christchurch, but that accounted for only a small part of the increase. WW2 had seen the opening of Ordnance factories, attracting workers and their families to the town. Ongoing clearance of older properties created yet a further demand for housing and the post-war baby boom also played its part as returning servicemen and women started their own families. Not all could follow the old tradition of sharing the family home, particularly when more than one child of the family was in the same position. This meant that the housing shortage in 1946 was particularly acute. Families took over (as squatters) sub-standard accommodation around the town, particularly in the Malpas Park area and the situation rapidly became a public scandal.

To the harassed Newport County Borough Council, Churchill's announcement must have been extremely welcome. It certainly offered the prospect of making substantial inroads into the housing problem and they identified sites which could be developed. Nothing could be done immediately, of course; the land

had to be acquired and, nationally, production of prefabs had to be planned and implemented. It was in this area that innovation came to the fore. There was no intention to stop the building of traditional houses nor to suspend work on the upgrading of existing properties. Instead it was proposed to use non-traditional materials in prefab construction and to use industrial capacity not traditionally associated with housebuilding, utilising war-surplus materials wherever possible. Speed of construction was essential and, more importantly, should be simple so that employment could be given to unskilled labour.

There were a number of different designs available but Newport opted for just two of the many. Between 1946 and 1950 a total of 750 prefabs were built across the town, 79 of the cheapest type, imported from the USA, and 671 of one of the most expensive designs, the Arcon Mk V. The two types were quite different in appearance and design, though the interior features were broadly similar.

All 79 of the USA design were constructed on the western side of Nash Road in neat rows. Known as Cheshire Avenue these prefabs had the shortest life span of any in the town, being demolished at the end of the 1950s so that a larger estate of permanent houses and bungalows could be built. The old name was discontinued and replaced with Hampshire Avenue and Crescent, Dorset Crescent, Derby Grove and Pembroke Grove.

The Arcons were distributed around the town, the greatest concentration being the adjoining Treberth Estate (180 prefabs) and Bishpool Estate (129 prefabs). Ridgeway had 131 and there were 112 at The Gaer. Near to the latter was the group of 71 at Stelvio. The remaining four sites were Lliswerry Road (Eschol Villa site - 16 prefabs), Brynglas Avenue (15 prefabs), Clevedon Road (13 prefabs) and Archibald Street (4 prefabs). This last group demonstrates the determination to shoe-horn dwellings into any available space, the site could just accommodate 4 prefabs and each had the "regulation" amount of land.

Mention of the demolition of the USA imports has already been made. It seems that they really were temporary dwellings and that they were pretty well life-expired. I remember seeing their demolition and even to me as an 11 year old they seemed to be quite flimsy affairs. However, the first demolition of Arcons followed shortly afterwards when the Eschol Villa site in Lliswerry Road was cleared, the prefabs being replaced by permanent bungalows. It is perhaps significant that the other early demolition of Arcons came about as a result of the widening of Chepstow Road when the first few prefabs of the Bishpool Estate were found to be in the way!

Another 30 years was to pass before any significant plans were drawn up for demolition; this time the plan was terminal as all Arcons were to be demolished. The Bishpool and Treberth estates were largely replaced by brick built bungalows, as were those at The Gaer. Other sites were either redeveloped with much larger (and far more expensive) properties or left undeveloped, but a few Arcon-style properties can be found – two are still on the Clevedon Road site and four in Archibald Street. This situation arose because tenants of the original Arcons had exercised their "right to buy" and had greatly improved or even rebuilt in brick. There is clearly another story behind these particular survivals; others had exercised this right across all of the sites. One can only wonder whether the developers of the larger sites had no option but to make it very worthwhile to owner-occupiers on these sites whereas it would not have been worthwhile on the very small developments.

The Arcon prefabs were a tremendous "hit" with the residents. What was so special about them?

Before answering this question we need to look at what was the "norm" for young newly-weds. Pre-war society was still very family-centred and it was common for extended families to live in the same house, particularly in working-class families. The first child of the family to marry would live at home, often occupying the front room of the house (which was rarely used otherwise except for receiving more important visitors) and one bedroom. Other facilities, such as they were, were shared – the kitchen and the outside toilet (sometimes at the bottom of the garden but more often outside in the back yard). Baths were not taken frequently as to do so meant hauling in a body bath from its usual living quarters in the yard, placing it in front of the living room fire and filling it with hot water from kettles. Given the time and effort involved in filling and emptying the bath, everyone shared the same water! Life must have been

difficult for the married couple, living and sharing with parents / parents-in-law, but things must have become incredibly more difficult when children began to arrive. If the couple could afford it they looked for a house to rent (these were, as we have seen, in very short supply) or a house in which they could rent more than the two rooms they already had. How did the prefab alter the lives of these people?

There was a general expectation amongst returning servicemen and women that, having given up a number of years fighting for their country, the Government would repay that sacrifice by providing homes that had modern facilities. The prefab did just that. It provided accommodation comprising a kitchen, living room, two double bedrooms and an inside toilet and bathroom, the bedrooms, living room and "facilities" all off an entrance hall. Outside space was generous – space for lawn, flower beds and vegetable plot – and an Anderson shelter for a shed. The Arcon Mk V was probably the very best design available. The design was extremely clever and not a single inch of space was wasted. Cupboards were plentiful and, since the long wall of the kitchen backed onto the bathroom wall, flattened "S" shaped units provided shelves in both rooms. A central services unit was able to deal with heating and plumbing as kitchen, bathroom and living room fire were all in back-to-back positions. The crowning glories were, however, the provision of a gas fridge and a gas wash boiler – very few middle-class families had these luxuries at this time. All of this was available for a weekly rent of 14/2d (71p)!

Although there was a front door into the entrance hall, most families rarely ever seemed to use it, preferring to use the kitchen door which was on the left hand side wall when viewed from the front. In my mid-teens I collected the weekly paper bill money from a section of the Bishpool Estate prefabs. There was a tremendous community spirit evident and complete trust. I would often knock on an open door, only to be asked "Who's there?" My reply – "Paper money" was completely understood and answered with "On the side". I entered the kitchen and took what was owed, which was alongside labelled piles of cash for the milkman and baker!

The prefabs were constructed from asbestos panels. It is a known fact that this material is fire-resistant and I can remember an incident in the late 1950s when one of the Archibald Street prefabs caught fire. As children we were fascinated by the devastation – and, in pre-health and safety days, it was possible simply to walk in to see the damage for ourselves. The contents were totally destroyed, but there was little external damage and it was rebuilt within a short space of time.

The decision to demolish all the remaining prefabs was taken in 1996. By this time they had exceeded their life expectation by 40 years, though it must be said that their estimated life span of 10 years was not a reflection on their construction or the materials used but simply a desire to build more permanent and traditional homes. As so often happens, great ideals fall victim to political realities and it became apparent that spending on housing was never going to be sufficient to meet an ever-increasing demand and the 10 year expectation was quietly dropped. A programme of upgrading had been undertaken, replacing windows and electrics in much of the stock, and the residents were generally as keen to remain in their prefabs as they were to be rehoused in new-build bungalows. I was a Churchwarden at St Teilo's church at this time and both the Bishpool and Treberth Estates fell within the parish. We did our best to assist a number of the less-able residents at a very trying time but it was clear from correspondence with the Council that the decision was largely based on the fact that the metal framing supporting the roof and walls of many of the Arcons was beginning to fail. Indeed, one of the Clevedon Road prefabs had virtually disintegrated and it was felt that, rather than try to estimate the potential life expectancy of each individual unit, blanket clearance would ultimately prove a cheaper option.

This was probably correct, though many residents were disappointed and upset by the prospect. It is something of a miracle that what might now be thought of as a utilitarian dwelling, provided in an emergency to fulfil a demand, could capture the public imagination in such a way. It did, though, and Newport's love affair with the Arcon Mark 5 prefab was both real and lasting to the extent that, even now, our lost prefabs are still the subject of conversation and memory.

Had they survived, the oldest would have celebrated their 75th birthday next year.



Top USA prefab, of which 79 were built in Cheshire Avenue, Newport.

Middle Arcon Mark 5 Prefab, of which 671 were built across Newport.

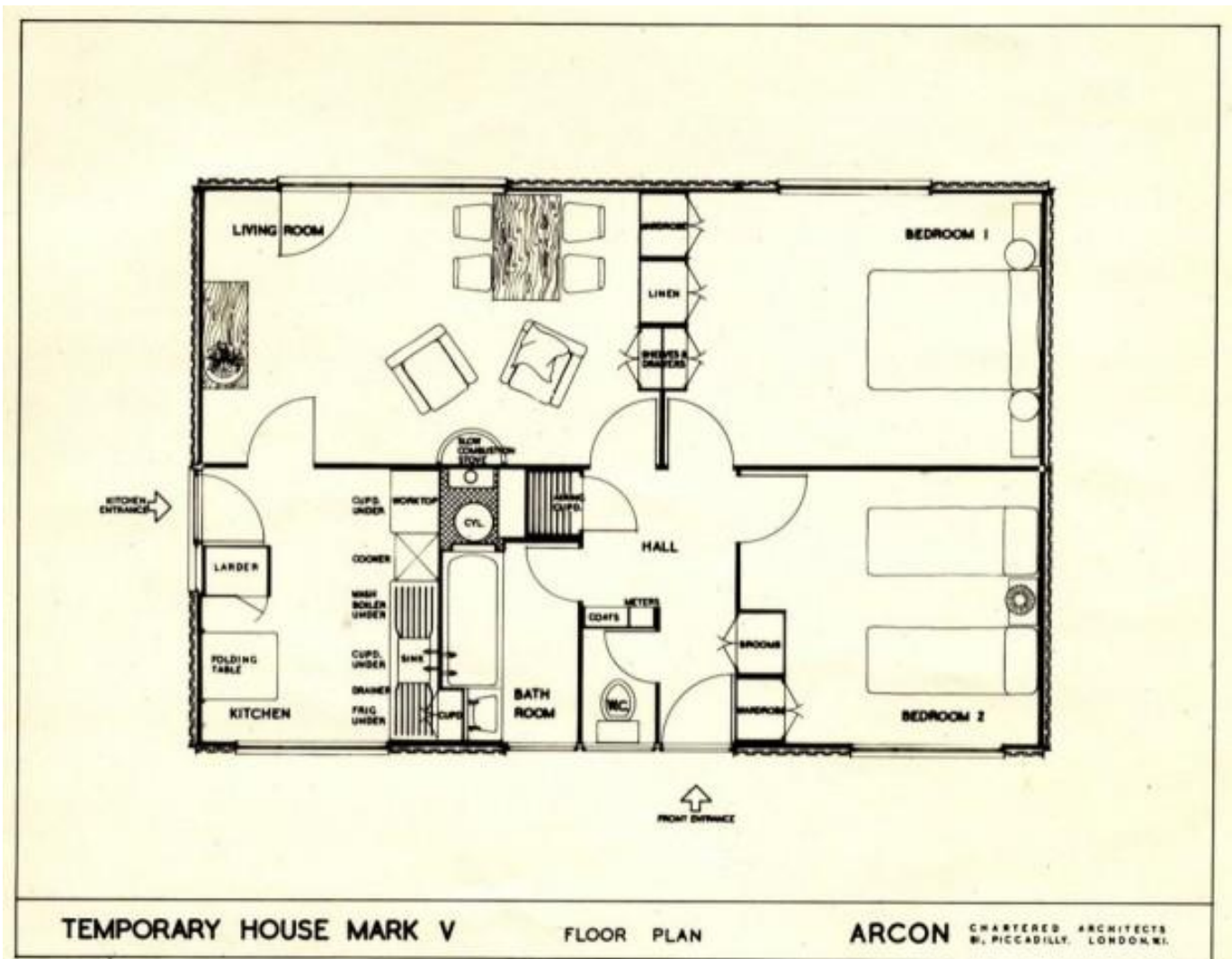
Bottom The kitchen of an Arcon – showing the fridge, the plentiful shelving and cupboards and the top of the “S” unit (shelf and plate rack) – the area below formed the bathroom shelf in the adjoining room.



Top The main bedroom. Wardrobes were fitted behind the photographer, next to the window.

Middle The living room. Behind the table are the backs of the wardrobes next to fitted cupboard and drawer unit. The fire is to the right between doors to the hall and kitchen.

Bottom Part of the spacious rear garden with its Anderson shelter shed.



This was the plan to which all Arcon Mark 5 prefabs were built. The main features that made this such a superb design are:

- Kitchen – sink with double drainer; fridge and wash boiler under. Gas cooker. Fold-down table. Ventilated larder.
- Entrance hall – all rooms except kitchen lead off. Broom cupboard, Coat hooks and meters on screen. Airing cupboard.
- Smaller double bedroom – fitted wardrobe paired with Hall broom cupboard.
- Larger double bedroom – fitted wardrobe and fitted linen cupboard. Shelves and drawers paired with identical unit in living room.
- Living room – French door to back garden. Heating stove (part of central services unit).

Note that the Anderson shelter is not mentioned on the plan. Newport was certainly liberal in the provision of these and they were usually situated just outside the Kitchen Entrance, separated by the width of the path and with the door on the front-facing end wall. Some variation was necessary to take account of the particular site – many of the estate sites were built on hillsides, needing a degree of flexibility in dealing with this essential outhouse!

When we are allowed a greater measure of freedom, anyone wishing to view one of these outstanding buildings will be able to do so at the Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings in Bromsgrove, just north east of Worcester. Recommended reading is "Palaces for the People" by Greg Stevenson, though this seems to be out of print now. For a book specifically on Newport's prefabs I recommend "Prefabrications" by Gary Robins, which is certainly available on both eBay and Amazon at the moment.

THE CAPTIVE EAGLE by Martyn Vaughan

Bright were the skies in which I rode
on winds that in cold torrents flowed.
Close to the sun was my abode.

Dark were the skies that I controlled
save when the lightning's flames unrolled,
and the fearsome thunder tolled.

But now my world is bounded by bars
and wingless things throw me dead meat.
I who broke the mists beneath my claws
and brooked no rival in the cold skies.

Grandeur was in my sharp-eyed view
Icy cirrus plains or tumbling clouds of rain.
None soared above me in the stormy air
None could meet my imperious gaze.

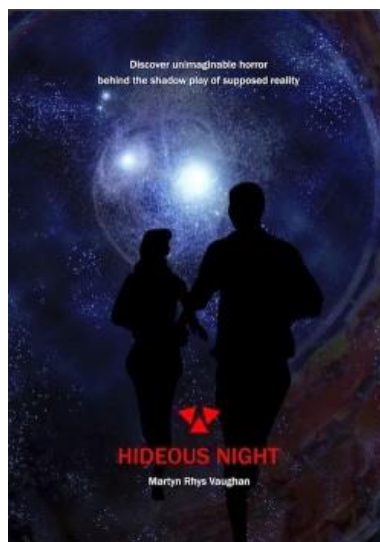
I matched thunderbolts in righteous rage,
snatched the kid from its grieving dam.
Challenged the sun and mocked the moon
That crawled like sheep in my wind-torn sky.

Narrow this world like an apish womb,
its light to me is a fetid gloom
that haunts a foully smelling tomb.

When can I die – when, oh when?

This straitened world will choke no more,
my spirit will fling wide this door
and tread the azure steps again.

Martyn is also the proud author of a new Sci Fi / Horror book, "Hideous Night". The reviews (<https://b2l.bz/oy5gM8>) give a flavour of what the book has to offer, To order use the Amazon link: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hideous-Night-Martyn-Rhys-Vaughan/dp/1838075224/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0



Bored during Lockdown? – Certainly Not! by Marion Murphy

This is my new selection of the Christmas Cards I design myself. Each one is unique. I take a lot of care in designing them and decorating them.

It's kept me busy during Lockdown as I'm missing going to the Craft Group.

I enjoy making them and searching for new dies to use for birthdays, anniversaries, special occasions and Christmas. Decoupage is another element I use and it really makes the cards stand out.

I've also raised personally over £400 for Calibre Talking Books for the Blind and also raised money for St. David's Hospice, and Sight Cymru. This year's fundraising is for the Alzheimer's Society.



Cryptic Crossword (page 8) - Answers

Across:- 1. Biped 4. Beseech 8. Tacking 9. Owing 10. Easy 11. Withdraw 13 & 14. Bass Drum 16. Nicholas 17. Slur 20. Erupt 21. High Tea 22. Slender 23. Greek.

Down:- 1. Butter Fingers 2. Picks 3. Drip 4. Bigwig 5. Smothers 6. Epigram 7. Highwater Mark 12. Assorted 13. Because 15. Washer 18. Lithe 19. Agog.

MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF DESERT ISLAND TIMES (DIT21) MUST BE WITH ME BY WEDNESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER, PLEASE. I HAVE SOME MATERIAL TO INCLUDE BUT NEED PLENTY MORE!

My Material Project - 'CAFÉ SAFIA' from Ros Lee

This project is for an art class I attend. We had to make something using material. I wanted to do something different as it is for our annual competition. We all meet at our centre and order an Indian takeaway. After this, the judging takes place, which of course did not occur this year.

I searched the internet for unusual material and saw some hessian coffee sacks for sale, discarded from factories after use. They were in good condition and most of them had logos on them which made them attractive. I also liked the idea of them being upcycled into something else.

I think I was inspired to do this, since we could not go out for coffee and it reminded me of those times!

As you can see from the photo, it even has a full cup of 'coffee'. I probably had this in mind, because of that famous drive-through eating venue in the vicinity of the U3A, which is where I saved my coffee cup from. Another product being upcycled!

The sacks had to be washed first, which I discovered after shaking them and got covered in strands. I accomplished this with soapy liquid and a hose-down in the back garden and not just the bags, as I was soaking after. Then I had to dry them flat by "drying on the green" as people would say years ago. You can't spin them because of the fibres.

The next stage was making the table, using a large sturdy storage box. I cut the bags to size and glued the fabric onto the box. The strength of the table was tested by me sitting on it. It held!

I used some thick rope to finish off the bottom edges. The background is actually the floor but it looked better as a backdrop for photos.

I was lucky to find quite a few coffee beans still in the bags, so after drying them in the sun, I painted each one in dark brown to give them a roasted appearance. After scattering them on the tabletop, I glued them individually to the fabric, time consuming but I liked the effect.

I enjoyed making it and it's ready for 2022's competition.



A Day on the Orient Express by Ros Lee

Our Journey started at 8.00 in Cardiff Central on a cold November day. We were celebrating my husband's 60th birthday. We had dressed in the costumes of the Orient Express era and were excited. Our boarding cards at the ready, as we were about to go back in time to the golden era of travel.

The train was part of the Orient Express line, the Northern Belle. The Northern Belle's exterior is hand-painted in burgundy and cream, with hand-painted signwriting. The service ran from June 1933 to June 1939. Our designated steward, showed us to our seats. I could not stop thinking about the film 'Murder on the Orient Express' as it was very similar in decoration. The country's top craftsmen worked on the design of the Northern Belle along with muralists, mosaic artists and marquetry experts.

The intricate decoration of the Pullman was fantastic, with mosaic floors in the restrooms adjacent to the Chatsworth carriage we travelled in. The carriages and ceiling were decorated with beautiful acrylic murals of flora and fauna. The narrow but splendidly restored hallway of the train was gleaming as you walked along. In the carriage overhead were the luggage racks of that period and the lights and curtains complimented the wooden panels of marquetry roses.

Our first introduction to the fabulous food was our breakfast. We had a lovely glass of Bellini, followed by Inverawe smoked salmon, to name but a few dishes. The ingredients are sourced from the regions the train travels through.

We travelled along through the Severn Tunnel to Bath Spa and then past the various places along the route. Arriving at Kensington Olympia. I was standing by the carriage, admiring it, when the Head Chef Alex Dobson introduced himself to me, and had his photo taken with me. A nice chap, full of good humour, even though he had been busy in the kitchens, which are narrow.

A luxury coach then took us on a tour through London to the West End, where we saw Billy Elliot in the Victoria Palace. A strong gripping performance of music and dancing. We boarded the coach and made our way through the glowing lights of the London streets, back to the Orient Express.

Our next fantastic experience was to come, a champagne dinner. As we took our seats, the carriage tables were laid with shining plates, crisp white serviettes and gleaming glassware. We started with a glass of champagne, plus wine accompaniments throughout. Brown Windsor soup, followed by Rhug Estate organic chicken. A Roulade of chicken wrapped in a cured smoked ham, seared supreme of chicken, accompanied by confit of shallots, chestnut mushrooms, roasted cocote potatoes and a café crème sauce. Followed by a cheese board, then old English trifle and coffee.

What a journey, to experience the ambience of another era and come away with some lovely memories.



Wordsearches submitted by Barbara Phillips

Can you find 12 types of BOOK in the first grid below and 14 types of TREE in the second? Answers are on page 28.

L	E	G	E	N	D	U	P	F
W	L	P	R	E	Q	U	E	L
Q	R	E	L	L	I	R	H	T
S	C	V	V	D	N	R	A	R
F	S	I	H	A	I	U	O	W
S	I	T	A	O	R	M	R	E
A	A	C	M	G	A	T	O	S
T	G	E	T	N	A	N	R	T
I	M	T	C	I	S	S	R	E
R	O	E	P	C	O	D	O	R
E	A	D	I	N	S	N	H	N

E	M	O	M	A	C	Y	S	T
W	A	C	A	C	I	A	U	D
E	H	K	W	J	Q	N	T	N
Y	N	C	P	O	T	T	P	D
R	R	A	R	S	I	S	Y	Y
B	L	E	E	I	E	N	L	S
M	E	H	P	Q	B	L	A	A
O	C	E	U	I	O	T	C	L
K	A	O	C	H	N	R	U	D
I	I	A	S	H	L	U	E	E
A	N	M	S	O	T	E	J	R

Sudoku

Each row and each column has to contain numbers 1 to 9 once only; each large square of nine smaller squares likewise. Do not guess numbers! Work out each by elimination.

The four puzzles get progressively more difficult.

No 1 is "Easy", No 2 is "Medium", No 3 is "Hard" and No 4 is "Evil". Good luck!

1. Easy

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

By popular demand (and because it is a Summer Special) we have a double dose of Sudoku in this edition.

The instructions for these are exactly the same as those printed above the puzzles on the previous page.

1. Easy

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

Wordsearches (page 26) – answers:

Books: Legend; Detective; Western; Horror; Prequel; Fiction; Romance; Memoir; Thriller; Satire; Travel; Saga.

Trees: Sycamore; Yew; Plane; Oak; Birch; Eucalyptus; Alder; Juniper; Ash; Holly; Chestnut; Palm; Acacia; Sequoia.

What We Were Doing ... - Angela Robins

This time of year we usually hold our Annual Open Event. This is our showcase that attracts a number of new members from over 60 visitors.

Members of our many groups take an active part in producing and manning their displays and 'selling' their groups. In addition we always get many existing members who come along to enjoy the event and do sterling work talking to potential new members. They are living proof of the social benefits of membership.

The free refreshments provide a welcome break and a chance to enjoy listening to the live performances from the Ukulele Group and our Choir.

Last Year we had a celebrity new member. The Craft Group had been busy crafting and constructing sets for their latest charity money-raising display - '60 Years of Barbie.' Amongst the boutique, florist, wedding, skating rink and her party in a bar settings, was Barbie sitting on a deckchair in the park reading her Newport U3A Newsletter - well she's old enough to be a member now; though she doesn't look a day over twenty!



Euan, the plastic Surgeon was asked "What is your favourite toy?" He answered: "A Barbie Doll, of course."

CHINESE VASES TRAPPED IN HONG KONG by Gwyn Havard

The recent news from Hong Kong, with China now seemingly taking absolute authority over the previously British protectorate, reminded me of an amusing event back in the 1990s, before the July 1997 “handover” of sovereignty by Britain.

I held the roles of IT Director of Argos in the 1980s, and International IT Director of Toys R Us in the 1990s, reporting to my boss at our TRU Head Office in New Jersey, USA. Both jobs required travel, especially the Toys R Us position which involved international travel on almost a weekly basis for the 8 years I served in that role. I did warn Toys R Us top management on many occasions that unless they started selling toys online worldwide, they would eventually be overtaken by the likes of Amazon and Ebay. Did they listen? Unfortunately not – with dire consequences as you now know.

My team could have designed and implemented the necessary systems to sell online quite easily. Anyway I digress.

I liked visiting Hong Kong, not only because the people were friendly and eager to learn at the TRU Office, but because shopping was amazingly cheap and the goods for sale were often unique, decorated by hand, and desirable. On one occasion I bought three large blue Chinese vases, magnificently decorated. I can see one of them now in my hallway, it is covered with large birds with white wings, black necks and beaks, and a red head. I still don't know which breed they are. Can anyone help? Anyway I digress again!

On my trips to lands far and wide, to install and train local staff on our new IT systems that I had helped design, I usually visited two or more countries during the same trip, to save on travelling costs and to make maximum use of my time. Perhaps Australia and Singapore; or Canada and USA; or France, Italy and Germany; or on this occasion Hong Kong and Japan. So I asked my secretary (yes we did have secretaries in those days) to book London to Tokyo with a stop off for a week in Hong Kong, plus a return ticket direct from Tokyo to London after spending the second week in Japan.

All went well to begin with. The outbound London to Hong Kong flight was brilliant because I got upgraded from Business Class to First Class (as I was a very frequent traveller with BA), so I could go upstairs in the Boeing 747, further forward even than the pilot downstairs, and help myself to champagne and loads of other goodies! Then sleep on a full length bed with comfy pillows.

My work went well in Hong Kong and I also enjoyed the night-life and the shopping. The vases were quite heavy and I did not relish carrying them all the way to Japan with me and then all the way back to London. They weighed more than the rest of my luggage combined. Then I noticed something on my travel documents and hatched what I thought was a clever plan. My return ticket direct from Tokyo to London, included a stop-off to refuel and take-on / drop-off passengers at guess where? Hong Kong! So clever Gwyn (or so I thought) decided to leave the vases in left luggage at Hong Kong Airport with the intention of collecting them during the 45-minute stopover there on the way back from Tokyo to London Heathrow.

By the way, Hong Kong's airport in the 1990s was not the present purpose-built new luxurious airport at Chek Lap Kok, 21 miles from the city. It was right in the centre of the city, one of the most dangerous airports in the world for large jets, which had to swerve left and right to avoid tower blocks within seconds of landing and taking off. No wonder they closed that airport to jets - the wings of my 747 seemed to almost touch the balconies of the flats in the tower blocks! Anyway I digress again damn-it!

I left my vases for a week at left luggage and travelled to Tokyo where I had an equally successful business trip with another set of even more amazingly friendly Japanese TRU employees, who always treated me like a King, and attended to my every need, as they do with all visitors. They even wrote down on cards instructions for Japanese taxi drivers who did not speak a word of English and would never have known where to take me. I also loved the very frequent Tokyo “tube” trains which stop at exactly the same place on the platform at exactly the right time. So people queue not along the platforms but in lines perpendicular to the platforms, close to where they knew the doors would open when the train arrived. Oops I've digressed yet again!

My flight back from Tokyo was fine, although I didn't get the upgrade this time. Still - business class is pretty nifty. We stopped at Hong Kong where some passengers left the plane permanently and others like me were told to wait in the departure lounge while the plane was refuelled. Don't go through customs they told me, but my vases were in the left luggage office which was through customs and outside near where the taxis pick up and drop off. Oops what do I do now? My cunning plan took shape. Well I had 45 minutes so I queued to go through customs which took quite a while. I then ran to the left luggage office and got my three vases after a bit of a wait for some clown to find them for me.

I then went to try to get back through customs only to be told that my bag was too big to carry onto the plane and it would have to be checked into the hold. So I queued at the check-in desk, waited another 15 minutes, and was getting slightly worried that my plane, with my other luggage already in the hold, would leave without me, all because of these Chinese vases. Eventually I reached the front of the check-in queue and put my bag containing my blue vases onto the scales. The British Airways assistant, who thankfully was an English woman working in Hong Kong, scanned my ticket as normal, in order to print the bar-coded tag to tie onto my bag.

Sometimes IT Systems are too clever for their silly boots. This one was not of my design! This British Airways system said "ERROR - DISALLOWED – THIS PASSENGER ALREADY HAS LUGGAGE IN THE HOLD OF THIS AIRCRAFT". I looked bewildered. The BA assistant also looked bewildered. "I've never seen that message before and I've been working here for 6 years", she said. "I'm sorry but you can't take that bag onto our plane."

She couldn't get the system to print my tag and without a tag the bag would not be allowed onto any aircraft. Anyway "How have you managed to get some luggage already onto this plane when you are still at the check-in desk?" she said. I went bright red and explained that this was another bag I had left here a week ago; and that I had just got off the plane that I was trying to get back onto.

"Well your plane is supposed to be leaving in 5 minutes but is not allowed to leave with your other bag in the hold, unless you are also on the plane. That is one of our regulations to prevent terrorism", she explained. "There might be a bomb in it? Is that why you got off?" she giggled. "So the plane will be held up until I get onto it; and what do I do with this bag?" I said. "Well either your other bag must be taken off the plane, or you need to get onto that plane, with or without this bag", she suggested. "I'd better inform my manager straightaway".

Two minutes later a flustered looking Hong Kong man appeared shouting in pigeon English: "*Why-Your-Bag-Not-Already-On-Plane?*" "*Why-You-Not-Back-On-Plane-Like-Everyone-Else?*" "*Why-Another-Your-Bag-On-Plane?*" "*What's-Going-On?*" "*Pilot-Wants-Go-He-Blaming-Me!*"

I just stood there looking sheepish and helpless. I changed tack and said "Can you please use your authority, sir, to help me get to the plane quickly, carrying my bag?" "Then our problems can be solved and you can end up being the hero".

To cut a long story short, the manager suddenly oozed with authority, ordered a porter with an electric cart, grabbed me and my bag, came with me and the porter to customs. Jumped the queue. Told me to flash my passport to one of his friends as we rushed through. We drove at speed through the airport directly to the gate, bypassing all barriers and going the wrong way down a one-way passage.

The plane and all its occupants were waiting for us. I was ushered onto the plane and my large bag was stored in an empty overhead locker near the door. The pilot thanked the manager for acting so quickly and he left beaming with delight as the hero I had suggested he would be. We left 10 minutes late but landed at Heathrow 10 minutes early with a tail-wind helping.

I guess the moral of this story is not to try to think out-of-the-box too often, nor try to bend the rules. I unwisely continued to do both and continued to cause trouble for myself and others. I am now retired but unfortunately divorced!

(See next page for a photograph of the vase)



..... and now for some pure nostalgia – a pub bar list from D Day (15th February 1971)

PUBLIC BAR PRICE LIST			
FEB 1971			
Draught Beers			
	Pint	Half Pint	
LIGHT or XXX	10p	5p	
BITTER	11½p	6p	
MAGNET	12½p	6½p	
Keg Beers			
	Pint	Half Pint	
DOMINO	11½p	6p	
GOLDEN	14p	7p	
GUINNESS	16p	8p	
HARP	16½p	8½p	
Bottled Beers			
	Large	Small	Nip
BELGIUM EXPORT	-	10p	-
MAGNET PALE ALE	15p	8½p	-
MILK MAID STOUT	14p	7½p	-
DOUBLE BROWN	14p	8p	-
MAGNET OLD ALE	-	-	8½p
LIGHT ALE or COB NUT	13p	7p	-
GUINNESS	17½p	9½p	-
HARP LAGER	-	11p	-
CARLSBERG	-	11p	-
Spirits and Wines			
		Per Measure	
WHISKY, GIN, RUM or VODKA		16p	
BRANDY		19p	
PORT		12p	
SHERRY	(Cream 13½p)	12p	
VERMOUTHS		12½p	