

# DESERT ISLAND TIMES

*Sharing fellowship in*  
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

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*Snowdrops by Judith Nash*

*A MISCELLANY OF  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

## Thanks to Barbara

Barbara Phillips has announced that she is resigning from her post of Convenor of the French Debutants Group.

Few of our members have been as active and so dedicated as Barbara and during her many years as a member she has attained numerous achievements.

Barbara developed our original website (one of the first U3A sites in the UK), she officiated at the planting of the U3A (*Liriodendron Tulipifera Aureomarginata*) tree in Belle Vue Park and assisted with the organising of our 20th and 25th anniversary celebrations. She has been proactive at many publicity events and gave much time manning our publicity stand at the 50+ Information Days at the Newport Centre.

In addition to all of this, Barbara was in office for three years as our Chairperson. She is also a First Aider and takes her turn at Door Duty with her husband Tony - they can often be found in the tea room to offer help and advice to all members.

Barbara has worked tirelessly and now is the time for her to draw on the success of her endeavours and enjoy her membership.

The group will now be convened by Phil Cheesman whom we warmly welcome.



### Wordsearch – submitted by Barbara Phillips

As always, words can run forwards, backwards, diagonally or vertically, but always in a straight line.

Can you find the 13 **SMALL THINGS** in the grid below?

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

Can you find the 13 **SHADES OF BROWN** in the grid below?

C	G	C	A	R	A	M	E	L
W	I	E	Z	N	O	R	B	A
Z	S	N	L	F	U	N	B	E
N	T	R	N	M	A	I	A	M
U	I	U	B	A	S	W	E	T
T	S	E	N	C	M	E	N	A
M	R	L	Y	T	F	O	R	O
E	I	I	S	F	S	R	N	I
G	T	L	O	G	S	E	E	R
M	O	C	H	A	I	S	H	E
E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C

Answers are on page 9

## **British Prime Ministers - Stanley Baldwin, the Unexpected Prime Minister by Gerald Lee**

In a survey of the best remembered prime ministers of the twentieth century Stanley Baldwin is unlikely to feature highly. One biographer called him the 'Unexpected Prime Minister,' suggesting his contemporaries, and probably even he himself, did not expect him to achieve the highest office. Some anecdotes are even a bit cruel. One cartoon has the child Baldwin meeting the elder self, and saying, 'Prime Minister? You?' Another is a story of Baldwin meeting a former pupil from Harrow on a train, who asks, 'You were at Harrow in '84. What are you doing now?'

Baldwin never seemed destined for high office; he does not even have a statue in Westminster, yet the period between the wars is sometimes called 'The Baldwin Age.' He is the only twentieth century prime minister to hold office three times and, except for Harold Wilson, to retire at a time of his own choosing. He defeated all his enemies. His style of moderate conservatism, which influenced the Labour and Conservative parties, is not so fashionable today, since the Thatcher era.

Baldwin's background was in the iron and steel industry. His father Alfred built up the family firm to a substantial business. He became MP for Bewdley and was never a significant figure at Westminster.

His mother was the daughter of a Methodist minister. She had literary aspirations. Rudyard Kipling was a cousin. Young Baldwin attended Harrow. His academic achievements declined after he was caught posting 'smut' to a cousin in Eton, for which he was flogged, and his father called to the school. He then went to Cambridge to study History. Again, his record suffered when his former headmaster at Harrow became Master of his college. He graduated with a third class degree.

The firm of Baldwin treated its employees with benevolence. During a coal dispute when the works closed, the firm gave financial help to its employees. During the war they also paid the Friendly Society subscriptions for men in the forces. Young Stanley mixed with the employees and even played football with them. There were never any strikes.

Baldwin had a deep religious faith. After Cambridge he considered ordination. He and his wife prayed together. Their first child was stillborn, but after that they had five children. The eldest, Oliver, was a homosexual at a time when such acts were criminal. Baldwin was tolerant and even met his partner John Boyce socially. When Oliver joined the Labour Party and became an MP in 1929, again Baldwin felt no animosity.

After a couple of failed attempts to stand for parliament he inherited his father's seat at Bewdley. Such was the respect for his father he was returned unopposed. He spoke barely once a year but was known as being sociable. During the war he became PPS to the Unionist leader Bonar Law, who was Chancellor and Leader of the House in the Lloyd George coalition. He entered the cabinet as Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Sometimes he deputised for his chief as Leader of the House due to Law's ill-health.

It was at this time he wrote a letter to the 'Times,' signed 'FST.' He suggested that the wealthiest in the country make a voluntary levy of around 20% of their wealth to reduce the war debt. He personally surrendered £120,000 war loan, which would have cost £150,000 at issue. As FST he witnessed his own war loans being destroyed. Not many followed, only a half million was raised.

Baldwin met Lloyd George socially and was impressed by him, but he could not accept the corruption. What made his career and distinguished him, was an eight minute speech to the parliamentary party in 1922 when he was President of the Board of Trade. Baldwin opposed the coalition continuing and wanted Lloyd George out of office. He called Lloyd George a 'dynamic force,' but added 'a dynamic force is not

necessarily right.' By 185 to 88 the anti-coalitionists won the vote. A Conservative government followed. Having been defeated, Austen Chamberlain resigned the leadership. Bonar Law was sufficiently well to return to lead the party and become PM.

Baldwin was never ambitious. He was even reluctant to accept promotion to Chancellor in case he appeared to benefit personally. As Chancellor he was unremarkable apart from agreeing with the USA the terms to repay war debts. Bonar Law told him not to agree to more than £25 million annually. He agreed 3% for ten years and 3.5% for the next forty, around £30 million annually. It must be unique for a PM to write a letter to a newspaper disagreeing with his chancellor: although signed 'Colonial' it was known that Law was the author.

Law's health continued to decline, until eventually he had to resign. In a break with precedent, he declined to advise on his successor. Austen Chamberlain had lost his position due to his support of the Coalition. There were no other strong candidates in the Commons. The strongest candidate, at least in his own mind, was Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary and former Viceroy of India. The King turned to the former PM, Arthur Balfour, for advice. Curzon had many personal failings, too aristocratic even for that time. One story was that he had never been on a bus. When he caught a bus outside the House of Lords and asked to be taken to Lords Cricket Ground, he could not understand when the conductor replied it was not on his route.

The outsider won. After just three years in the Cabinet and at the age of 55, Baldwin became prime minister. Typically, he asked for the prayers of the nation. He offered the Treasury to the former Liberal war time Chancellor, Reginald McKenna. For a time, and with only Gladstone as a precedent, he combined the posts of PM and Chancellor. McKenna, who was comfortably ensconced as head of the Midland Bank, refused the offer.

A theme in Baldwin's career was a fear that Lloyd George would destroy the Conservatives as he had the Liberals. There were reports from the USA that Lloyd George was shifting his position on Free Trade. Baldwin's motives for deciding to hold an election on tariff reform are debated by historians. Bonar Law had given a pledge not to introduce tariff reform without an election. By choosing this as the issue, Baldwin achieved a tactical advantage. The Liberals reunited; he remarked to the King it was 'no bad thing.' Although the Liberals gained seats, they were a spent force. Baldwin rejected any ideas of coalition under Asquith, thus ushering in the first minority Labour Government.

In opposition the Conservatives reformed their party structures, giving a bigger role to women. The shadow cabinet had a secretariat and to broaden the party's base candidates were relieved of the burden of personal liability for election expenses.

In government the Labour Party was moderate. MacDonald was reassuring and had some foreign policy success. Guessing the government would not last long, Baldwin allowed the Labour Government to fail so that at the next election he could lead a Conservative government.

When the Conservatives did win, another tactical move of Baldwin isolated Lloyd George further. The surprise choice as Chancellor was Winston Churchill, who had not even been a Conservative Candidate in the general election. He had even left the Conservatives twenty years earlier over Free Trade.

One of Baldwin's failings was that he rarely interfered with his ministers' departments. Hence at the Home Office, Joynson Hicks had rather a free rein closing night clubs and fighting vice. Neville Chamberlain chose to go to the Ministry of Health and was a reforming minister.

The decisions on the economy were left to Churchill. Since the war Britain had struggled to regain its export markets. The coal industry could not compete. The owners wanted to reduce wages and remove the seven hour day. A Royal Commission under Herbert Samuel, recently returned from Palestine, recommended wage reductions and improved conditions. It only supported continuing the seven hour day because an increase would add to the surplus. The government offered a temporary subsidy.

Churchill decided to allow the two proponents in the debate over the Gold Standard to put their case to him, McKenna for, and Keynes against. A return would involve deflation of the economy even more. Churchill came down in favour of McKenna.

Baldwin tried to influence both sides in the coal dispute to reach an agreement. When a general strike was called his response was, 'Give Peace in our Time.' 'I am a man of peace, but I will not surrender the safety and security of the British Constitution.'

The strike failed. Baldwin was never one to gloat over his opponents' defeats. The government did, however, introduce a Trade Union Bill which restricted TU activity and reversed the 'opt out' for the political funds. It did not however seem to damage the Conservatives among working class voters.

Baldwin did not expect to lose in 1929. Again, he allowed the Liberals to prop up a minority Labour Government. Feeling exhausted he retired to his normal holiday retreat of Aix-les-Bains. His preference once again was to allow the government to fail so that he could lead a purely Conservative Government. When it did fail it was only the involvement of the king that made him accept a National Government.

Within his own party he was facing strong opposition supported by the Press Lords Northcliff and Rothermere. He faced down his critics at two meetings in Caxton Hall. At the first he attacked them for daring to ask for control over a Conservative Cabinet. One of his most memorable phrases comes from those meetings, 'Power without responsibility, the prerogative of the Harlot through the ages.'

At the second meeting of MPs and candidates Baldwin won the vote by 462 to 116. On his next appearance at the House both sides cheered him. He even thought of fighting the St George's by-election against an Empire Party candidate when his candidate withdrew. In the event, Duff Cooper fought the seat and won easily by 5710 votes.

Baldwin agreed to serve under MacDonald in a coalition which was really a Conservative Government with a few members from other parties at the top. MacDonald's mental health gradually deteriorated and increasingly Baldwin and Chamberlain ran the government. Although Labour was reduced to 52 members and led by a rather ineffectual leader in George Lansbury, Baldwin always maintained good relations with them.

As Lord President of the Council, he was to all purposes the minister of defence and deputy PM. Despite this he accepted only the salary of a cabinet minister below a Secretary of State. The salaries had not increased since first introduced under Asquith. His salary of £2000 was the same as Lloyd George had received at the Board of Trade in 1906. Financially he was squeezed. The family firm was in difficulty and not paying dividends.

He sold his London home, which became the Belgian Embassy. He was allowed to live in Downing St to ease his finances.

He represented Britain at the Ottawa Conference, where he failed in his objective to persuade the Dominions to allow British goods entry free of tariffs.

Churchill went into the political wilderness over India. Sir John Simon, the former Liberal Cabinet Minister was asked to produce a report on the future government of India. He agreed on condition the Conservatives did not put up a candidate against him at the next general election.

The report recommended eventual dominion status in a federated India. The Government of India Act 1935 was based on Simon's report. Baldwin worked with his close friend, the viceroy Lord Irwin, better remembered as Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary at the outbreak of the war, to move towards self-government.

Eventually MacDonald's ill health led to his decision to retire as PM. He and Baldwin changed places; a move barely noticed. Baldwin fought the 1935 election as leader of a National Government. The economy was improving and there was a mood of stability. Most of the cuts had been reversed. In many ways people felt more prosperous as prices fell and productivity rose. Low interest rates and hire purchase encouraged spending on housing and luxury goods such as radios. Tariffs encouraged many international firms, particularly in motoring and white goods, to open factories in Britain.

Yet there was the other Britain, associated with hunger and unemployment. Jarrow pricked the conscience of the nation. Baldwin declined to meet the marchers. No-one had a real answer to the problems of the depressed areas. Government schemes did little to help. Baldwin only once visited a depressed area while he was in office.

Attlee was acting Labour leader and had little political weight. The National Government fought the election on rearmament and stability. Their case was helped by international events. They could also claim that in Britain the fringe parties were insignificant. On its creation Mosley's BUF was feted by the Press Lords as a ginger group to bring a spark to a weak Conservative Party. Now the BUF was in decline. It did not field any candidates in 1935. Mosley was derided as a joke figure in P G Wodehouse's Jeeves novels, portrayed as Spode, leader of the Blackshirts. The Communists were more of an intellectual than political force. The ban on political uniforms in 1936 hit all the fringe parties.

The Labour Manifesto included the disbandment of the RAF. Labour regularly voted against the defence estimates and had no credible foreign or defence policy.

Baldwin's mind turned to retirement. MacDonald, still in the cabinet as Lord President of the Council, lost his seat at Seaham and had to be found a new seat in the Scottish Universities. Perhaps they both thought of retiring together.

Events however again brought Baldwin to the centre of a crisis, this time the desire of the King to marry a twice divorced American Mrs Simpson. Typically, Baldwin hoped at first the crisis would go away. He managed to persuade British newspaper owners to keep the story under wraps, but it eventually broke. One US headline read, 'King's Moll Renoed in Wally's Home Town.' The famous American Journalist H L Mencken called it 'the biggest story since the Resurrection.'

After consulting with the leaders of the Dominions, Baldwin spoke candidly to the King and told him if he married Mrs Simpson, he would lose the throne. He had also spoken to the Labour leadership and knew they would not support a bill in parliament approving his marriage.

Lloyd George suggested the Prince Charles option of his wife taking the title Duchess of Renfrew. The King's party of Lloyd George, Oswald Mosley and Duff Cooper did not amount to anything. Reluctantly the King broadcast his abdication speech fulfilling his father's prediction, 'After I am gone the boy will ruin himself within twelve months.'

Baldwin gave one of his greatest parliamentary performances. He had forgotten his notes. Speaking impromptu he held the house and was praised on all sides. He was probably correct in his words, 'I am convinced that where I failed no-one else could have succeeded.'

Baldwin then began to think of retirement. He did not enjoy the rough conflict of parliamentary life. Every year he had a break of four weeks at Aix-les-Bains. His worst moment was when he badly handled the crisis in Abyssinia. He had to allow his foreign secretary Samuel Hoare to resign when the Hoare Laval Pact was leaked, splitting the country between the Emperor and the Italians. Hoare mounted an able defence, but still had to resign.

He also mishandled the appointment of a successor to Hoare, giving Austen Chamberlain the impression that at 74 he would be re-appointed Foreign Secretary, and then appointing Eden instead. An offer of a non-departmental job did not satisfy Austen who felt justifiably miffed.

In 1937 Baldwin retired. His achievements were to defeat his enemies. Lloyd George was leading a Welsh Liberal party comprising four members of his family; the press lords were now his supporters; the fringe parties counted for nothing, and, in so far as he was an enemy, he had prevented Edward VIII causing even more trouble. After having been, to his mind, double crossed by Poincaré, the French PM, he left Foreign Affairs to his ministers. His two rivals in the party, Churchill and Chamberlain, never felt strong enough to challenge him or brave enough to wield the knife. One of his last actions was to increase parliamentary salaries. He was aware, especially among Labour MPs, that the stipend of £400 was inadequate.

He had made a conciliatory gesture to Churchill allowing him to sit on a defence committee. However, Winston had really excluded himself and had little support. Allegedly Baldwin said he was keeping Winston 'fresh' for the next war. Under pressure Baldwin agreed to appoint a Minister of Defence Co-ordination, a post which might have appealed to Churchill. Instead, he appointed the safe Sir Thomas Inskip, the former Attorney General.

He accepted the customary earldom. MacDonald, who had retired earlier on health grounds, had refused one.

Baldwin returned to the quiet country life he loved. His reputation was damaged by a book 'Guilty Men,' blaming him for Britain's lack of readiness when war broke out. One of the authors was Michael Foot, the future Labour leader.

The criticism is not entirely fair. As Chancellor Churchill had reduced defence expenditure to £110 million. After many delays Baldwin finished work on the naval base in Singapore. He proposed to increase air defence expenditure to £76 million, with the introduction of the Merlin engine; Radar; the variable pitch propellor; and the Spitfire fighter. Chamberlain as Chancellor cut the figure to £50 million. Nevertheless, defence expenditure rose by £394 million over five years.

The 1937 Defence White Paper proposed a budget of £1,500 million, of which £400 million would be covered by borrowing over five years.

Baldwin's own justification was that if he had gone to the country on rearmament before 1935, the pacifist mood in the country would have led to defeat.

He had his greatest success in the Abdication Crisis. He called the King 'half child, half genius, like talking to a child of ten years old.' A letter Baldwin wrote to him on his retirement was not answered, which was extremely discourteous.



He was a successful party manager, preserving a bland moderate conservatism. Most of all he saved the Conservatives from Lloyd George and his ideas of coalition.

Equally by bringing Labour into government he influenced it sufficiently to be a credible party of government. He once said to a new MP, 'Never do anything to increase the sense of bitterness between the parties in Parliament.' Although he cultivated the image of a genial gentleman pig farmer, he let most of his land to tenants. But he was also the first politician to master radio broadcasting in the same way Wilson mastered television in the nineteen sixties. He gave good advice to any speaker, 'When I broadcast, I go along at a crawling pace so that people can not only hear me but take it in as I go along.'

He rarely interfered or sacked a minister, even Duff Cooper who was a poor war minister. The unfortunate Samuel Hoare returned to the cabinet after the Abyssinian crisis. As Malcolm Muggeridge remarked, the same names were reshuffled, Inskip, Hoare, Simon, Chamberlain.

In retirement his health deteriorated. He worked on committees to relieve refugees and opposed the Munich agreement. His reasons were that the crisis might pass, and Hitler fight an eastern war against Russia.

When war came the 'Daily Mirror' columnist Cassandra made bad publicity over his attempt to save his railings. Lord Reith, now minister of works, refused to intervene. The death of his wife was also a blow. Against his wishes part of his house was requisitioned to accommodate refugees. Some local tradesmen refused to do business with him.

Yet at one of his last public engagements, a memorial to King George because of his deafness, he thought he was receiving a hostile reception. He was surprised to be told he was being cheered.

He died in 1947, feeling disowned by his party. The only public memorial, near his home in Astley, was paid for by Winston Churchill. He does not have a statue in Westminster.

Baldwin probably did not have the ambition to be PM. He suffered from nervous disorders and found the strains of office difficult. He chewed his tongue and sniffed blotting paper. After a period of confrontation, such as after the general strike, he would have to take a break and pass responsibility to a subordinate.

As a speaker and parliamentarian, he could rise to the occasion. He was never accused of dishonour in public life. He described Lloyd George as a 'corrupter of public life.'

If not a great man, he was a principled one, who perhaps deserves more credit than he is usually given.

### **Wordsearches (page 3) - Answers**

#### **Small Things:**

Mouse Midge Mite Chick Flea Mini Minnow Shrimp Ant Amoeba Penny Pin Baby

#### **Shades of Brown:**

Caramel Bronze Cinnamon Nutmeg Chestnut Oatmeal Chocolate Mocha Coffee Umber Tan Biscuit Fawn

## **The Sounds of Disability (part 2) by Neil Pritchard**

The Jazz world has produced many outstanding disabled musicians including Ray Charles, Art Tatum, Roland Kirk, Lennie Tristano and Django Reinhardt.

Django Reinhardt was born in 1910 and grew up in a gypsy camp outside Paris, where he learned to play guitar and violin. As the most famous and arguably most iconic European jazz musician of all time, Reinhardt's life was as eventful as his music was influential. Jean or 'Django' Reinhardt was a Belgian-born Romani-French jazz musician who lived through most of the first half of the twentieth century. He combined the melodies of American jazz with the faster rhythms associated with Gypsy Romani music. His innovative approach earned him an extensive following in the jazz world. This combination, along with his use of the acoustic guitar as a lead instrument, provided a rethinking of the role of the guitar in jazz. What makes Reinhardt's truly original solos all the more impressive, is that he was unable to read sheet music and, due to a devastating fire in his Romani wagon, only had three fully working fingers on his left hand for most of his career. The injuries he sustained compromised his ability to form certain chords – he had to completely relearn how to play guitar, making his skill and influence even more extraordinary and unique.

After meeting French-Italian violinist Stéphane Grappelli, the pair formed the Quintette du Hot Club de France, which went on to become one of the most famous jazz groups of the 1930s and 1940s. They used only string instruments: violin, three guitars and bass. The Quintette brought hot club jazz to the forefront of the European jazz scene, rivalling great American swing artists like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. When the Second World War broke out, the Quintette were on tour in the UK; whilst Stéphane Grappelli opted to stay in Britain, Reinhardt returned to Paris, where his position as a Romani jazz musician in the Nazi-occupied city was a precarious one. The Nazis persecuted the Romani people and saw jazz musicians as opponents of the regime. It is remarkable that Reinhardt, who was in the limelight as a Romani jazz musician, not only managed to survive the war, but also carried on performing live in Nazi-occupied Paris. In addition, he made seventy recordings of his music throughout the war, including liberation anthem "Nuages" (Clouds). When Reinhardt eventually decided to leave occupied France, he was captured, and it was his good fortune that a jazz-loving Nazi officer allowed him to return to Paris unscathed.

Django Reinhardt changed the ways jazz could be played and listened to forever. He created a new type of jazz which could rival American swing, using his musical ear to write his solos and to develop his iconic guitar style. Apart from the fact that he overcame his disability, one of the most notable and impressive aspects of Reinhardt's life is that, although he came from a group which had been marginalised for centuries, and who were facing the worst persecution and genocide in their history, he still managed to create ground-breaking developments in jazz, and gain widespread popularity doing what he loved. His Romani identity and family remained important to Reinhardt throughout his life; he would often just leave Paris to join his family for a few days, without even telling the Quintette. On 16 May 1953, while walking home after playing in a Paris club, he collapsed outside his house from a brain haemorrhage. It was a Saturday, and it took a full day for a doctor to arrive. Reinhardt was declared dead on arrival at hospital, he was only 43. However, his music lives on and continues to inspire musicians today. His children and grandchildren are musical; his second son Babik is a jazz guitarist and Babik's son, David, leads his own jazz trio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANArGmr74u4>

There's been some incredible music produced by disabled women musicians around the world. Notable amongst these women is Triple Grammy Award winner Dame Evelyn Glennie, who lives with profound deafness. She is the first person in history to successfully create and sustain a full-time career as a solo percussionist, performing worldwide with the greatest orchestras, conductors and artists. Born in 1965 she grew up on a farm in the north-east of Scotland. Glennie became drawn to percussion as her hearing declined, because she could 'feel the sound'. At the age of 16 she gained a place at The Royal Academy of

Music in London where she studied orchestral percussion and piano. She quickly realised that there was a life for percussion outside the orchestra and became determined to define a new role for solo percussion. Glennie paved the way for orchestras globally to feature percussion concertos when she played the first percussion concerto in the history of the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in 1992. A leading commissioner of new works, Glennie has vastly expanded the solo percussion repertoire with more than 200 pieces to her name from many of the world's most eminent composers. She has said that "It's important that I continue to commission and collaborate with a diverse range of composers whilst recognising the young talent coming through".

She composes music for film, television and theatre and regularly provides masterclasses and consultations to inspire the next generation of musicians. Throughout her career, Glennie has had the privilege of working with many artists from the worlds of pop, jazz, folk, classical and contemporary music. Her solo recordings, which now exceed 40 CDs, are as diverse as her career on-stage. These range from original improvisations, collaborations, percussion concertos and ground-breaking modern solo percussion projects. She became an international star when she led 1000 drummers in her prominent role in the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. "Playing at an event like that was proof that music really affects all of us, connecting us in ways that the spoken word cannot". Glennie was awarded an OBE in 1993 and has over 100 international awards to date. She is the patron of several charities and regularly participates in events to raise money and awareness for organisations such as Great Ormond Street Hospital. As a keen collector of percussion instruments, she has gathered a private collection of global instruments, consisting of over 2,000 items. "I realised as soon as my parents bought me my second pair of sticks that I was going to be a collector of something!" The collection also encompasses concert programmes, awards, photos, paintings, letters and scores spanning her remarkable career. Her vision is to open a centre that embodies her mission to Teach the World to Listen. "My career and my life have been about listening in the deepest possible sense. Losing my hearing meant learning how to listen differently, to discover features of sound I hadn't realised existed. Losing my hearing made me a better listener." This is an example of her stunning playing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVh1dKKzlek>

Music has long been known for its healing abilities. Whether you're performing music or basking in its glow, it has the uncanny ability to make you feel better. This is why it comes as no surprise that so many people with paralysis enjoy creating music. It can help you feel like a whole person, if just for a moment. There are hundreds of musicians around the world with spinal cord injuries. One of these is a singer and motivational speaker from Australia - Tim McCallum. He is one of the only quadriplegic opera singers in the world. After twenty-five years of diverse performance experience, Timothy McCallum is one of Australia's most exciting and loved local performers and is fast becoming an international phenomenon. But it almost wasn't to be. At the age of 18, he was well on his way to commencing a successful career in the music & theatre industry when a diving accident changed his life forever, potentially shattering his dreams of treading the boards ever again. After breaking his neck, leaving him a quadriplegic, doctors and specialists told him that he would never sing again the way he used to. But he changed his technique to overcome his paralysed torso muscles, by holding onto the back of his wheelchair to project his voice. He now sings better than ever, and he was able to soar to the heights of some of the great tenor arias from the opera repertoire.

His resilient character and extraordinary spirit have touched the hearts of the arts community, as they have watched him defy the odds, rehabilitate and return to the stage to continue his performing career. The achievements and experiences speak for themselves, but it's his voice that tells his story the best. After his nation-stopping performance in The Voice on Australian TV in 2015, McCallum has been touring much of Australia performing and speaking about his incredible journey, the barriers and challenges he has had to face and overcome, to now be one of Australia's most sought after entertainers. Recently he has appeared at the Sydney Opera House, The Queensland's Children's Telethon, and at the Nation's

Capital, Parliament House, for events and functions. But more importantly, these have been opportunities for him to represent the disability community and showcase the talents of disabled musicians who strive through adversity. His advocacy work is equal to his passion for performing, and it's his attitude to spread a positive message about disability that has recently earned the following honours: National Ambassador of Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week; National Disability Awards Guest Artist; and International Day for People With A Disability Ambassador. McCallum has become the voice of Australians living with a disability and his music touches the hearts of all those he performs to. His achievements have been truly phenomenal as you can see in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8yr8l4oGPw>

Let's end with a bit of Wonder with the one and only Stevie Wonder. Stevie Wonder has had a unique career as a singer, composer, instrumentalist, performer and humanitarian. After his early years with Motown, who signed him up as 'Little Stevie Wonder' aged eleven, he gradually released a striking array of innovative music that would influence the world of contemporary music as we know it today. Born in 1950, two months premature, he was placed in an incubator for life support. However an excess of oxygen resulted in the scarring and detachment of his retina, leading to a condition known as Retinopathy of Prematurity resulting in blindness in both eyes. In 1963, aged thirteen, he had his first US number 1 hit single and album with the first live recording to ever top the charts. He is still the youngest person to have reached the number 1 spot. During the 1960s under the control of Motown, he evolved from the status of child prodigy to that of music super star. With a string of hits that progressively involved more and more of his song-writing, musicianship and production skills, he entered the 1970s on a solid foundation, to create some of the most enduring popular music of the century.

At age 21, Stevie broke away from the Motown hit machine and demanded full artistic control for creating and producing his own music. This resulted in an impressive array of albums that are still considered ground-breaking achievements. With this new-found freedom in the early 1970s Stevie pioneered the use of synthesisers, incorporating electronic sounds seamlessly with acoustic sounds. This venture hugely influenced the face of popular music and the development of electronic musical styles. In 1973 he was the first black person to win a Grammy (the top international music award) for the best album of the year. In 1989 he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of fame, the youngest solo artist to achieve that award. Behind the music scene, he is committed to many humanitarian activities such as: Dr King Jnr's National Holiday; the fight against Apartheid in South Africa; fundraising for AIDS research; numerous Children's and Cancer charities; and numerous Disaster Relief fundraisings. Stevie has also held his House Full of Toys annual charity concert since 1995 to raise funds for underprivileged children during the festive Christmas season.

In 2008 he played an important role in the election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States, performing and speaking at many rallies and offering his song, Signed Sealed Delivered, as the theme of the campaign. In 2009 Stevie was awarded the Gershwin Prize for Popular Music by the US Library of Congress, again the youngest person to achieve this award, which was presented to him at the White House by President Obama. In addition, he was commissioned by the Library to write a classical piece, an honour not normally bestowed on popular music artists. He is currently a United Nations Messenger of Peace and has been able to win the rights to publish copyrighted works into formats accessible to the visually impaired throughout the world.

Stevie Wonder is without question one of the great personalities in music history. His powerfully expressive vocal presence, coupled with his musical elegance, forms part of the broad, personal range of irresistible music and compelling emotions which are his personal hallmarks. I'll end with one of his iconic songs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxoBaEQGMPo>



## Sudoku

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

The four puzzles get progressively more difficult.

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

1. Easy

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

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

## The Dream by Ian Lumley

The dream woke Jane up with sweat drenching her body. She felt as if she had just come out of a particularly hot and humid shower. She had a clear memory that she had dreamed the same dream yesterday - or had it been the day before? She wasn't sure, now that the thought had made its way into her consciousness.

She had had dreams before, of course, but as usual they had begun to disappear as soon as she opened her eyes in the morning. This one was different. She could recall the details with an astonishing clarity. She saw the dog running into the middle of the road, causing the driver to swerve violently. She saw the little girl standing beside her Mum, waiting to cross the road. She saw the car clip the dog and throw it into the girl's path, before ploughing into the two people standing there. She saw the girl thrown bodily up and over the front of the car and heard the Mother's desperate scream. Then she woke up.

She would sometimes walk to work. The Insurance Offices were some distance away, but when the weather was good, she would make the effort. She knew it would be good for her health. When she looked at the sky before setting off though, she had hesitated. It didn't look promising, and so she had decided that the car was going to be a more sensible option. Jane had always taken pride in doing the 'sensible' thing. She had lost a couple of boyfriends that way. She remembered in particular Bill saying to her 'go on, take a chance, it'll be much more fun and excitement' as he tried to persuade her to run along the outside edge of the cliff-walk they had started out on earlier. She had looked at the drop on the other side and said 'No'. It had been the beginning of the end for that relationship.

As she switched on the ignition, she realised that it had actually been some time since she had walked to her office. The weather had been like this for some while – in fact she couldn't really remember the last time she had walked, now that she came to think about it. She checked the fuel tank as she thought that, but it still seemed to be showing full. She had obviously made a good choice of the car – one which was quite frugal in terms of consumption. It was a long time, she thought with a bit of a start, since she had checked the tyres and oil too. She would do those things at the end of the week.

If she hadn't looked up into the mirror to check that her hair was OK, she would have missed it. Behind her a car rounded the corner and she saw a little girl on the pavement with an adult – presumably her mum – waiting to cross. They were too far behind her to make out any details, but she was able to make out the dog as it dashed out from nowhere and saw the driver swerve – too late. She somehow knew what was coming, and so she pulled in, to the side of the road, meaning to reverse back and see if she could help. Before she could even get her car into gear, an ambulance sped by, with blue lights flashing, on the other side of the road. She knew there was little she would be able to add and so she drove off to her offices.

After parking her car, she walked quickly to the stairs to get to Mr Thomson's Team area and her office which she shared with Richard and Ben. Walter, the Security Guard on duty smiled to her as she walked past and commented 'it's a lovely day today isn't it? The weather looks like it's going to be great for the school sports this afternoon, eh?' She smiled back as she went up the staircase, although she felt certain he had said that yesterday, hadn't he?

The day was one of those uneventful ones where she had her head down over insurance claims without even getting a single telephone call. Richard had to come and borrow a manual from her to help him set up the new photocopier though, and she saw that his shirt had the breast pocket torn at one corner. She was going to tell him but thought better of it – his wife would probably have been annoyed that she had noticed.



She left the house a few minutes earlier than normal the next day. She was so sensible that she planned even that detail fully – it was who she was. This morning though, she didn't have toast with her coffee, as she would normally have had. She opted for a single slice of bread with Lemon Curd, and it hadn't taken her quite so long. As a result, she was in the car (the weather still didn't look promising) quicker and had rounded the corner before she thought to see if the little girl with her Mum – and the dog – were anywhere in sight. She couldn't see them from where she was, but she just knew deep down they would be. That feeling was reinforced when an ambulance went past very quickly with blue lights flashing.

When she got into the office she saw that Richard had the same shirt on with a torn pocket. At coffee that morning she mentioned it to him. 'Really!' he said. 'You must be mistaken'. 'No' she said. 'I'm not – the same pocket on the same shirt. You were wearing it yesterday and the day before'. He looked at her sceptically. 'That's not the only thing that seems to happen every day' she said.

Richard looked at Ben. Ben said 'what do you mean?' She started to talk and couldn't stop herself describing what had happened with the little girl and her Mum - and the dog. Ben said 'you're just imagining things.' 'No, I'm not.' Jane snapped back at him. 'It's happened for the last three days – something unusual is going on.' Ben looked at Richard. 'Should I go and see Mr Thomson?' he queried. Richard replied 'Perhaps you'd better, otherwise we don't know who else might get involved.'

The two men had only been in Mr Thomas' office a few minutes before he opened his door and asked Jane to step inside. When he said 'Now what is all this nonsense about?' she couldn't contain herself. After she had explained, he looked at the other two men and said 'It might be better to nip this in the bud'. When she followed the men into the lift, she was surprised to find that the lift went down. That in itself wasn't such a surprise – she knew there was a basement. What she hadn't known, was that there was another floor below that. Getting out she found herself in a room with a large computer circuit board spread out on an even larger table. The two programmers already there were poring over reams of data and making what seemed like minute adjustments to some of the pathways glowing gold in the low light.

Mr Thomas explained that the programmers were responsible for making sure that the computer systems set up for their advertising contracts were all working properly.

'It wouldn't do,' he said, 'to allow the programs to become corrupted by individual errors in programming, otherwise they would end up giving false information to their customers. It seems that somehow or other, your memories have become corrupted and you are now more aware than necessary of what is happening in the real world outside of the circuit board. This could lead to false information being fed to our customers and we need to change your programming to put it right. You are after all merely a computer chip on the board, so it shouldn't be difficult to erase your programming and start over again. You will feel nothing.' he said, as he strapped her into the chair beside the memory board.

It was only as he started to attach the electrodes to her skull, that she looked up at him and asked 'and whose circuit board are you a part of?'

### **Answers to Cryptic Pyramid (page 13)**

1. ER (Royal Engineer reversed).
2. Ear (Homophone).
3. Pare (Anagram of pear).
4. Pearl (Homophone).
5. Repeal (Reverse Word).
6. Per/C/ale (Number in Word Exchanges).
7. Re/P(lace)D (Word Exchanges/Part Word).
8. Parcelled (Double Definition).
9. Callipered (Anagram).



## **A Plea for Solitude by Pam Cocchiara**

Is this a bread knife I see before me,  
The handle in reach of my fist?  
I've an urge to grab it and use it.  
An urge I must try to resist.

Ever since we were married we've lived together  
In harmony in this residence,  
But together now 24/7, no breaks,  
The atmosphere's getting quite tense.

In this small one-bedded apartment  
We're together all day and all night.  
I can feel my nerves getting more and more frayed  
And there's nowhere to go for respite.

I knew all his traits before we were wed  
And we've both got our faults, that I know,  
But having to live in lockdown together  
The cracks are beginning to show.

In this enforced co-existence  
The veneer is wearing quite thin  
And all his little idiosyncrasies  
Are beginning to get under my skin!

Things I once saw as amusing, endearing  
Are running around in my head  
And after nearly three months of lockdown  
Are driving me potty instead.

They are murderous thoughts that I'm getting,  
And they're starting to drive me insane.  
I keep picturing a bloody scenario  
Where I stab him again and again.

So please make an end to this lockdown  
Before I take hold of this knife  
And end up a convicted murderer,  
And am sentenced to prison for life,

Then if kept for years in confinement,  
With time for my sin to atone.  
Please make sure they put me in solitary,  
In a single cell - all on my own!

## What we were doing ... - Angela Robins

Four years ago the Play Reading Group was instigated and is now well established, meeting every Wednesday afternoon. Jean Daniels, the convenor, has a long association with the Newport Playgoer's Society and is able to borrow a good variety of scripts from its extensive library. Play Reading creates confidence and brings a script to life.

Readings have included Cold Comfort Farm, Gaslight, The Lady in the Van, Under Milk Wood and the Corn is Green. The last two were quite a challenge for our non-Welsh speaking members!

Occasionally we listen to recordings or watch DVDs of plays we have read, to see how the professionals do it. This is the group for those who love escapism into characters and plots of fantasy created by playwrights. Acting experience is not required and there is no typecasting. It's enjoyable and we don't have to learn lines or get first night nerves (except when we had fun performing a short Cinderella pantomime at our U3A's 25th Anniversary Concert). We really do read plays for pleasure and we have a lot of laughs.

The photograph shows the group enjoying an annual lunch.



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**Euan** and **Juanita** visit the theatre to see the play Macbeth whilst on an anniversary treat at Stratford-Upon-Avon. Juanita makes a bet. "I bet Duncan gets mortally stabbed by Macbeth before the interval" and Euan accepts. They watch the play and, as predicted, Duncan is stabbed to death, so Euan has to pay up. Juanita returns the money saying "It wasn't a fair bet, I studied this play at school." Euan tells her to keep the money and admits "I read the play last month at U3A Play Reading Group - but I didn't expect him to fall for the same trick twice!"

## **A Child's Magic by John Williams**

Mrs. Jones looked around her living room. Her blue eyes settled on the untidy heap of Jamie's toys. She thought of the countless times she had berated him for being so untidy and making so much noise. Now she would have given the world to hear his excited chatter or the crash of toy on toy. Now the house was drenched in the sound of sobs and tears. Funny, she thought, how things lose their importance.

"Mummy, mummy what's a snip?"

Mrs. Jones spun around to look at her eleven-year-old daughter, Jill, dressed in blue denim bib and brace over a pink top. The laces of her designer trainers were fashionably loose.

"Let's have a look at the dictionary, babe." Mrs. Jones thumbed through the pages of the big black book.

"Here we are, to cut off with sharp shears...sound of a pair of scissors..."

Jill shook her blonde head.

... "or a tailor's slang for a small piece, babe."

A whoop of joy escaped from her daughter's mouth.

Mrs. Jones smiled as she recalled this was the first joyful expression she had heard from Jill since her little Jamie had gone. In her darkest hours, she tossed and turned with the notion she might lose both of her offspring.

Jill, her forehead creased into a frown, continued to stir the bowl, the wooden spoon thudding against the sides of the china bowl.

Next door's puppy, Rover, emitted a high-pitched yelp and leapt over the 6-foot fence into his own garden.

"What have you done to that puppy, babe? Come here now!"

"Nothing, he had something I needed," smiled Jill, as she continued to whisk furiously at the contents of the bowl and chanted in a strange tongue, over and over.

"What did you say?"

"Sorry, it's a secret code from the magic book we use and I can't tell you."

"And what's that in my best mixing bowl," demanded Mrs. Jones as she grabbed the bowl and retched as she peered into it. She made out in the slime, fragments of slugs, snails, and unless she was mistaken a small portion of Rover's tail.

"I think you'd better explain, young lady." Anger flushed Mrs. Jones's cheeks. Jill cast her eyes down and handed her mummy a crumpled scrap of paper.

Mrs. Jones unfolded it with care and read "Little boys are made of slugs, snails, and snips of puppy dog's tails."

Tears welled up in her eyes as she clutched her daughter tightly to her breast.

"Oh babe, it's only a silly nursery rhyme."

"Oh mummy, I had to do something to try to get Jamie back, he's been gone for over three days. You looked so sad."

Outside a golden shaft of sunlight illuminated a small figure at their back door.

Their breath caught as they heard the tinkle of a boy's laughter and the back door burst open as Jamie dashed into the kitchen.

"Hey, mum, I'm starving." Jamie stood caked in foul-smelling mud and for once Mrs. Jones said nothing as she crushed his thin body to her ample breast.

"Where have you been Jamie for the last three days?"

"Only out, mum, I fell down a stupid mine shaft."

Mrs. Jones turned, smiling, to Jill and said, "You've no idea what magic you've done, today."

"If you say so, mummy."

### **Pearls of Wisdom. Submitted by Mike Brown**

1. Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because you won't have a leg to stand on.
2. Steer clear of people who know the answers before they understand the question.
3. Never look down on anyone unless you're helping them up.
4. Never marry for money: you can borrow cheaper.
5. If you and your friend are being chased by a mad dog, don't worry about out-running the mad dog, just worry about out-running your friend.
6. It's better to give than to lend, and it costs the same.
7. If you look after the pounds you don't need to worry about the piffling pennies.
8. Always remember that the person who says they are willing to meet you halfway is usually a poor judge of distance.
9. Try to be the kind of person your dog thinks you are.
10. When you are in over your head, make sure you close your mouth.
11. It's better to arrive ten minutes late in this life than ten years early in the next.
12. Don't obey all the rules or you'll miss the fun.
13. Always keep your words soft and sweet - just in case you have to eat them.
14. Live out of your imagination, not your history.
15. Saying 'no offence' doesn't make you less offensive.
16. If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving is not for you.
17. Kindness is more important than wisdom.
18. Don't take yourself too seriously; no-one else does.
19. It's easier to buy trousers with elasticated waistbands than it is to diet.
20. And finally . . . at the moment, it's better to be six feet apart than six feet under.

### **Answers to Misplaced Characters (Page 13)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Bertha Mason / Jane Eyre              | 8. Joe Gargery / Great Expectations                  |
| 2. Dr Aziz / A Passage to India          | 9. Curley / Of Mice and Men                          |
| 3. Atticus Finch / To Kill a Mockingbird | 10. Raskolnikov / Crime and Punishment               |
| 4. Mr Collins / Pride and Prejudice      | 11. Winston Smith / 1984                             |
| 5. Nelly Dean / Wuthering Heights        | 12. Mr Gradgrind / Hard Times                        |
| 6. Nogood Boyo / Under Milk Wood         | 13. Lady Bracknell / The Importance of Being Earnest |
| 7. Lancelot Gobbo / Merchant of Venice   | 14. Estragon / Waiting for Godot                     |
|  | 15. Cordelia / King Lear                             |

## Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 30

Unusually nobody made a positive identification of the first photograph, though Dave Woolven did say that it might be Chepstow Road. It was – taken from the top of Somerton Road. Although I do not intend this to be a “Then and Now” feature, I thought it worthwhile to include the photograph from DIT 30 and to add a present-day shot (at a wider angle to make the location more obvious). Just out of shot to the right is the Cross Hands pub. The original shot, taken around 1900, shows a tram at the then-terminus of the service – unfortunately the ubiquitous white van has taken its place now! A comparison of the shots shows that the pair of semi-detached houses is still recognisable, but that the hillside behind them was still undeveloped “then” whereas it is now completely taken over by residential houses, largely built in the 1920s and 1930s. There is still evidence of Old Newport to be found, but it is not always obvious!



On the opposite side of Chepstow Road and moving back from the spot towards Beechwood Park, were a number of shops that formed the Beechwood shopping area. On the corner of Somerton Road was Spencers’ grocery shop, home also to the local Post Office through my childhood; adjoining this in Somerton Road were three small shops, all eventually part of Leathland’s “empire” – sweets, tobacco, toys, games, fancy goods amongst other things, were available here. Towards Beechwood Park were two butchers, Shepherds the greengrocers, a ladies’ hairdresser, Jacques the shoe repairer and his sister who sold children’s clothing, and Giles the Chemist. Beyond the Presbyterian Church were two more tobacconists and confectioners, Williams the baker, confectioner and grocer – and a third butcher! Beyond Warwick Road was a greengrocer, another tobacconist and confectioner (with a gents’ hairdresser at the rear – certainly through into the 1970s this was fitted out exactly as it would have been when new and I often wonder whether it eventually found its way to St Fagans!) From this list alone it will be seen that, like most out-of-town shopping areas in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it really was self-sufficient. Now, like most others, very little is left other than the confectioners and a Spar mini-market.

The second photograph, recognised by a number of readers, shows the booking hall at Newport Railway Station as it was from around 1930 to the 1970s. The entrance to and exit from the platforms was on the left, the room beyond the wall in the distance was the large station restaurant and to the right was the booking office. The station as a whole was greatly enlarged in 1879 but the large block above the booking hall and all of the adjacent areas were included in a major rebuild during the late 1920s. Prior to this there were two booking offices in this area – the main one in this part of the station building and one close to the foot of the steps leading down from the footbridge that crossed the station and came out in Devon Place and Mill Street. Many passengers arrived at the station via this footbridge and the subsidiary office sped up their purchasing of a ticket and relieved pressure on the main office. There was, at the time, a small booking office on the middle platform, used primarily for rebooking in the days when different railway companies operated services and it was often cheaper to rebook for different legs of the journey. As part of the 1920s rebuilding, the middle office was closed and the footbridge office was replaced by a new entrance and booking office in Devon Place. The footbridge office wasn’t dispensed with, however; it was incorporated into the new booking office shown in the photograph, but was always operated as a separate entity. Yet a third office was opened in the late 1930s, also incorporated into the main office, but with the added facility of being “mobile” at times of great demand, when it could be set up at the side gate at the top of Cambrian Road – generally only used for exits or an entrance for passengers with a ticket. It was of great use when there were large movements of troops during the war, all of whom had

to be “booked”. Behind the photographer was the Enquiry Office – and that was also a booking office! All four of these continued to operate through to the late 1960s, although the Devon Place office closed in November 1963. Needless to say I have many examples of tickets issued at all of the offices, including the one on the middle platform which closed in the 1920s.

**... and this edition’s challenges!**



The first will be easy for old Newportonians, but as usual, memories of the building or of the area in general would be welcome. The second is less easy, though the building still stands. Over to you!

**I celebrate a birthday in lockdown (SJB)**

Like many of you (most of you before we are through, I suspect!) my birthday this year was spent at home. There was nowhere to go and, apart from Gill, I saw only a few family members (socially-distanced from the pavement). Thank Heavens for Zoom, though – friends and family were with me in the lounge throughout the day! Our middle daughter has a good sense of humour and, surprisingly, excelled herself with a birthday card – it is so apt that I had to share it with you!

