

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.27

3rd December 2020



I'm dreaming of a white Christmas ... but any sort will be a bonus!

Painting by Judith Nash

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

Christmas

2020 has been unique in many ways, as I'm sure everyone will agree! However, one thing that hasn't been mentioned – for the first time in living memory, I should think – is the number of shopping days left before Christmas. This is, of course, hardly surprising, as we have no idea even now whether shops might be closed at a moment's notice, but I guess that most of us will have done much of our shopping online this year, even if we have not done so previously.

I can do nothing to help you with your Christmas shopping I'm afraid, but I can provide you with a few free gifts, which hopefully might cheer your Christmas 2020, which is unlikely to resemble any we have encountered before.

The first thing you will receive will be a **Musical Hamper**. This will contain all of the elements of the traditional Carol Service which cannot, of course, be held this year. You will not hear our choir nor the readings and other literary items delivered by our members, but they will all be included, either as links or as text. I am providing a wide choice of the usual carols and a number of Christmas items – enough to put together a few carol services if you wish! I intend also to include Christmas secular items and it will be your choice of what you want to listen to. The advantage, of course, is that you will have this for as long as you like, and you can revisit items as often as you wish.

As you will be aware, we traditionally take a retiring collection at the Carol Service which is passed on to a local charity. We had decided to support the Serennau Children's Centre at High Cross but it will not be possible to take our normal "bucket" collection, of course. As an alternative, we are asking members who would like to make a donation – no matter how small – to do so by cheque, made payable to **J KERR** and sent to Newport SE Wales U3A, c/o 242 Caerleon Road, Newport NP19 7GR. Please support this excellent local charity if you are able.

The second "Christmas offering" is the next edition of **Desert Island Times**, which will be a **Christmas Special**. Although I already have a large amount of material, I am always pleased to receive more and I am appealing for material both for the hamper and the Christmas Special. Everything submitted will appear in one or the other of these "presents". With this in mind, can I please ask that all contributions are with me **NO LATER THAN 6pm ON FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER**.

Provided I have enough new material, I propose to publish the first DIT of 2021 on or around 8th January, but I am running short of non-Christmas items now so your contributions will be gratefully received!

ZOOM MEETINGS

You will be aware that some of our groups are meeting using Zoom – at the moment French Debs, French Intermediate, French Literature, Italian, Welsh, Meditation, Choir, History, Craft, Creative Writing and Family History groups have booked slots. Should you wish to join any of these sessions, please contact the relevant Convenor via our website for details. We are also setting up a "Social" group to replace the ad-hoc meetings that have been taking place at various venues since the summer. The prospect of winter weather looming means that these gatherings are not really viable, and this will go some way to maintaining contact for the next few months at least. Details will be circulated shortly.

We have also been invited to join Cwmbran U3A Zoom sessions – they have access to DIT – and they currently have them in History, Poetry, Quiz, Gardening, Viewpoints, Short Stories, Open mic, Memory Lane and Craft. If anyone is interested, please contact one of these 3 people for details:

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A Day in the Life: The Beatles Story part 2 by Neil Pritchard

The origin of the song 'A Hard Day's Night' was later recalled by Evening Standard journalist Maureen Cleave, who was a friend of The Beatles: "One day I picked John up in a taxi and took him to Abbey Road for a recording session. The tune to the song 'A Hard Day's Night' was in his head, the words scrawled on a birthday card from a fan to his little son Julian: "When I get home to you," it said, "I find my tiredness is through..." Rather a feeble line about tiredness, I said. "OK," he said cheerfully and, borrowing my pen, instantly changed it to the slightly suggestive: "When I get home to you/I find the things that you do/Will make me feel all right." The other Beatles were there in the studio and, of course, the wonderful George Martin. John sort of hummed the tune to the others – they had no copies of the words or anything else. Three hours later I was none the wiser about how they'd done it, but the record was made – and you can see the birthday card in the British Library. Here it is in all its glory:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yjyj8qnqkYI>

I hope you all "feel alright". Things were about to change! Touring internationally in June and July 1964, the Beatles staged 37 shows over 27 days in Denmark, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. What a schedule, they must have been absolutely worn-out at times, no wonder they turned to recording studio working, in the not too distant future. In early 1965, following a dinner with Lennon, Harrison and their wives, Harrison's dentist, John Riley, secretly added LSD to their coffee. Lennon described the experience: "It was just terrifying, but it was fantastic. I was pretty stunned for a month or two." He and Harrison subsequently became regular users of the drug, joined by Starr on at least one occasion. Harrison's use of psychedelic drugs encouraged his path to meditation and Hinduism. McCartney was initially reluctant to try it, but eventually did so in late 1966. He became the first Beatle to discuss LSD publicly, declaring in a magazine interview that "it opened my eyes" and "made me a better, more honest, more tolerant member of society". Controversy erupted in June 1965 when Queen Elizabeth II appointed all four Beatles MBEs after Prime Minister Harold Wilson nominated them for the award. In protest – the honour was at that time primarily bestowed upon military veterans and civic leaders – some conservative MBE recipients returned their insignia.

In July, the Beatles' second film, Help!, was released, again directed by Lester. Described as "mainly a relentless spoof of Bond", it inspired a mixed response among both reviewers and the band. McCartney said: "Help! was great but it wasn't our film – we were sort of guest stars. It was fun, but basically, as an idea for a film, it was a bit wrong" Help! was perhaps the album on which The Beatles began maturing, beginning a process that would result in the breath-taking creativity of their later 1960s work. The album took in country and western, bluegrass, folk, classical and rock styles, making it their most diverse collection to date. The Beatles' fifth official UK album release, Help! was the soundtrack to the group's second feature film. It contained 14 songs: 10 by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, two more by George Harrison, and a further two cover versions. The film had an early working title of Beatles II, until Eight Arms To Hold You was suggested. This was used for around three weeks in March and April 1965, and Capitol Records even announced that it would be the title of their first US single of the year. Eventually the title Help! was settled on and, as for A Hard Day's Night previously, John Lennon rose to the challenge of composing the theme song.

Lennon looked back in 1980 to his feelings at that time: "The whole Beatle thing was just beyond comprehension. I was eating and drinking like a pig and I was fat as a pig, dissatisfied with myself, and subconsciously I was crying for help. When 'Help!' came out, I was actually crying out for help. Most people think it's just a fast rock 'n' roll song. I didn't realise it at the time; I just wrote the song because I was commissioned to write it for the movie. So it was my fat Elvis period. You see the movie: he is very fat, very insecure, and he's completely lost himself. And I am singing about when I was so much younger and all the rest, looking back at how easy it was." My favourite number on the album is "Yesterday" which a critic at the time said was on a par with some of Schubert's greatest songs. While Lennon was exploring depths of his emotions with his lyrics, Paul McCartney wrote the most famous song of his lifetime - "Yesterday". It went on to be recorded by more than 3,000 different artists, making it the song with the

most cover versions in existence. It was performed an estimated seven million times in the 20th century, and regularly tops polls to find the greatest songs ever written. George Martin said, "It wasn't really a Beatles record and I discussed this with Brian Epstein: 'You know, this is Paul's song, shall we call it Paul McCartney?'" He said, 'Whatever we do we are not splitting up The Beatles.' So even though none of the others appeared on the record - it was still The Beatles. Twenty eight million viewings on YouTube are testament to Yesterday's continuing popularity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXTJBr9tt8Q>

The group's third US tour opened with a performance before a world-record crowd of 55,600 at New York's Shea Stadium on 15 August 1965 – perhaps the most famous of all Beatles' concerts. Towards the end of the tour, they met with Elvis Presley, a major initial musical influence on the band, who invited them to his home in Beverly Hills. September 1965 saw the launch of an American Saturday-morning cartoon series, *The Beatles*, that echoed *A Hard Day's Night*'s slapstick antics over its two-year original run. The series was a historical milestone as the first weekly television series to feature animated versions of real, living people. In mid-October 1965, the Beatles entered the recording studio; for the first time when making an album, they had an extended period without other major commitments. Until this time, according to George Martin, "we had been making albums rather like a collection of singles. Now we were really beginning to think about albums as a bit of art on their own." Released in December, *Rubber Soul* was hailed by critics as a major step forward in the maturity and complexity of the band's music.

While some of *Rubber Soul*'s songs were the product of Lennon and McCartney's collaborative song writing, the album also included distinct compositions from each, though they continued to share official credit. "In My Life" is considered a highlight of the entire Lennon–McCartney catalogue. Harrison called *Rubber Soul* his "favourite album" and Starr referred to it as "the departure record". McCartney has said, "We'd had our cute period, and now it was time to expand." In 2003, *Rolling Stone* ranked *Rubber Soul* fifth among "The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time", *All Music* described it as "one of the classic folk-rock records". Originally released on *Rubber Soul* in the UK, 'Nowhere Man' was born of John Lennon's feelings of isolation in his Weybridge home, where he spent many hours in solitary contemplation, away from the mayhem of Beatlemania. 'Nowhere Man' was written by Lennon during the late stages of *Rubber Soul*, when he and Paul McCartney were struggling to come up with enough songs for the album. He said "I was just sitting, trying to think of a song, and I thought of myself sitting there, doing nothing and going nowhere. Once I'd thought of that, it was easy. It all came out. No, I remember now, I'd actually stopped trying to think of something. Nothing would come. I was cheesed off and went for a lie down, having given up. Then I thought of myself as 'Nowhere Man' – sitting in his nowhere land". When McCartney arrived the next day to begin a song writing session, he found Lennon asleep in his conservatory: "When I came out to write with him the next day, he was kipping on the couch, very bleary-eyed. It was really an anti-John song. He told me later, he didn't tell me then, he said he'd written it about himself, feeling like he wasn't going anywhere. I think it was actually about the state of his marriage. It was in a period where he was a bit dissatisfied with what was going on; however, it led to a very good song". 'Nowhere Man' made its way into The Beatles' live repertoire, and was one of the songs performed during their final concert at San Francisco's Candlestick Park on 29 August 1966: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8scSwaKbE64>

In England in June 1966 George Harrison met sitar maestro Ravi Shankar, who agreed to train him on the instrument which he subsequently used on one of their songs. What transpired was a rich and fruitful partnership between the pair, which would not only see Harrison promote both Shankar and Indian music through his various channels with The Beatles, but it would also see Shankar become a deeply respected musician in the Western world on his own merit. As he gained confidence with the complex instrument, Harrison recorded the Indian-inspired song "Within You Without You" on the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," helping spark the raga-rock phase of 60s music, and drawing increasing attention to Shankar and his work. Almost as soon as they returned home from a US tour in August, the Beatles faced a fierce backlash from US religious and social conservatives (as well as the Ku Klux Klan) over a comment Lennon had made in a March interview with British reporter Maureen Cleave. "Christianity will go", Lennon had said. "It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right and I will be

proved right ... Jesus was alright but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It's them twisting it that ruins it for me." His comments went virtually unnoticed in England, but when US teenage fan magazine *Datebook* printed them five months later, it sparked a controversy with Christians in America's conservative Bible Belt region. The Vatican issued a protest and bans on Beatles' records were imposed by Spanish and Dutch stations and South Africa's national broadcasting service. Epstein accused *Datebook* of having taken Lennon's words out of context. At a press conference Lennon pointed out, "If I'd said television was more popular than Jesus, I might have got away with it. He claimed that he was referring to how other people viewed their success, but at the prompting of reporters, he concluded: "If you want me to apologise, if that will make you happy, then okay, I'm sorry."

Released in August, a week before the Beatles' final tour, *Revolver* marked another artistic step forward for the group. The album featured sophisticated song writing, studio experimentation, and a greatly expanded repertoire of musical styles, ranging from innovative classical string arrangements to psychedelia. Among the experimental songs that *Revolver* featured was "Tomorrow Never Knows", the lyrics for which Lennon drew from Timothy Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. McCartney's "Eleanor Rigby" made prominent use of a string octet. Harrison's emergence as a songwriter was reflected in three of his compositions appearing on the record. Among these, "Taxman", which opened the album, marked the first example of the Beatles making a political statement through their music. In 2003, *Rolling Stone Magazine* ranked *Revolver* as the third greatest album of all time. As preparations were made for a tour of the US in August 1965, the Beatles knew that their music would hardly be heard. Struggling to compete with the volume of sound generated by screaming fans, the band had grown increasingly bored with the routine of performing live. Recognising that their shows were no longer about the music, they decided to make the August tour their last.

The band's concert at San Francisco's Candlestick Park on 29 August was their last commercial concert. It marked the end of four years dominated by almost non-stop touring that included over 1,400 concert appearances internationally. "Eleanor Rigby" really is not a pop record in the conventional sense — after all, it marked the first time that none of the group played any instruments on a track. Instead, two string quartets (both playing the same melodies to "double" the sound) create a funereal soundscape perfectly suited to the song's tale of loneliness, anonymity and death. While poignancy had never been far removed from some of The Beatles' best early compositions ("In My Life", "Yesterday", "Help"), in "Eleanor Rigby" the band delivered an intense tragedy. That well over 300 artists have covered the track, is a testament to the irresistible draw of The Beatles' original. But the song's impact extends far beyond music. Eleanor Rigby became a kind of reference to all the isolated and destitute. In Liverpool a statue was erected of "her" in commemoration of "all the lonely people" and in the way it immortalises the overlooked and downtrodden. I've chosen a recent video by Paul McCartney at a live concert.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weN-l8SOiFU>

This next period marked a major turning point in the Beatles music. This was going to have a huge impact on the development of new music of all different forms, over the coming years. Freed from the burden of touring, the Beatles embraced an increasingly experimental approach as they recorded "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band", beginning in late November 1966. According to recording engineer Geoff Emerick, the album's recording took over 700 hours. He recalled the band's insistence "that everything on Sgt. Pepper had to be different. We had microphones right down in the bells of brass instruments and headphones turned into microphones attached to violins. We used giant primitive oscillators to vary the speed of instruments and vocals and we had tapes chopped to pieces and stuck together upside down and the wrong way around. Parts of 'A Day in the Life' featured a 40-piece orchestra". The sessions initially yielded the single "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" in February 1967. The Sgt. Pepper LP followed with a rushed release in May. The musical complexity of the records, created using relatively basic recording technology, astounded contemporary artists. Among music critics, acclaim for the album was virtually universal.

The overwhelming consensus was that the Beatles had created a popular masterpiece: a rich, sustained, and overflowing work of collaborative genius. It was driven by bold ambitions, and startlingly original music and raised people's expectations of what the experience of listening to popular music on record could be. Sgt. Pepper became the major driver for an explosion of mass enthusiasm for album generated music, that would revolutionise both artistic tastes and the economics of the record business. Sgt. Pepper topped the UK charts for 23 consecutive weeks, with a further four weeks at number one in the period through to February 1968. With 2.5 million copies sold within three months of its release, Sgt. Pepper's initial commercial success exceeded that of all previous Beatles albums. It sustained its immense popularity into the 21st century while breaking numerous sales records. In 2003, Rolling Stone ranked Sgt. Pepper at number one on its list of the greatest albums of all time. Paul McCartney said: "After the record was finished, I thought it was great. I thought it was a huge advance, and I was very pleased because a month or two earlier the press and the music papers had been saying, "What are The Beatles up to? Drying up, I suppose." So it was nice, making an album like Pepper and thinking, 'Yeah, drying up, I suppose. That's right.' The final track of their masterpiece (Sgt Pepper) was a "A Day In The Life". This found The Beatles at the peak of their creative powers, an astonishing artistic statement that saw them fearless, breaking boundaries and enthraling generations of listeners with the timeless quality of their music.

"A Day In The Life" was inspired by a series of disconnected events that entered John Lennon's consciousness: The death of millionaire socialite Tara Browne, his own appearance in Richard Lester's film *How I Won The War*, and a council survey that found 4,000 holes in the roads of Blackburn, Lancashire. Lennon said: Just as it sounds: I was reading the paper one day and noticed two stories. One was about the Guinness heir who killed himself in a car. That was the main headline story. He died in London in a car crash. On the next page was a story about four thousand potholes in the streets of Blackburn, Lancashire, that needed to be filled. Paul's contribution was the beautiful little line in the song, "I'd love to turn you on," that he'd had floating around in his head and couldn't use. On the recording there was John Lennon on vocals, acoustic guitar, piano, Paul McCartney: vocals, piano, bass. George Harrison: maracas, Ringo Starr: drums, bongos, George Martin: harmonium, Mal Evans: piano, vocals, alarm clock, plus an orchestra of 45 musicians. Just listen to these amazing sounds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usNsCeOV4GM>

On 27 August 1967, their manager's assistant, Peter Brown, phoned to inform them that Brian Epstein had died. The coroner ruled the death accidental. He died of an overdose of Carbitral, a form of barbiturate or sleeping pill, although it was widely rumoured to be a suicide. His death left the group disoriented and fearful about the future, Lennon recalled: "We collapsed. I knew that we were in trouble then. I didn't really have any misconceptions about our ability to do anything other than play music, and I was scared. I thought, we've had it now." Harrison's then-wife, Pattie Boyd, remembered that "Paul and George were in complete shock. I don't think it could have been worse if they had heard that their own fathers had dropped dead." During a band meeting in September, McCartney recommended that the band proceed with *Magical Mystery Tour*. It was the first example of a double EP in the UK. The record carried on the psychedelic vein of Sgt. Pepper. *Magical Mystery Tour* first aired on Boxing Day 1967 to an audience of approximately 15 million. Largely directed by McCartney, the film was the band's first critical failure in the UK. It was dismissed as "blatant rubbish" by the *Daily Express*; the *Daily Mail* called it "a colossal conceit"; and *The Guardian* labelled the film "a kind of fantasy morality play about the grossness and warmth and stupidity of the audience". Gould describes it as "a great deal of raw footage showing a group of people getting on, getting off, and riding on a bus". Although the viewership figures were respectable, its slating in the press led US television networks to lose interest in broadcasting the film.

The group were less involved with *Yellow Submarine*, which only featured the band appearing as themselves for a short live-action segment. Premiering in July 1968, the film featured cartoon versions of the band members and a soundtrack with eleven of their songs, including four unreleased studio recordings that made their debut in the film. Critics praised the film for its music, humour and innovative visual style. A soundtrack LP was issued seven months later; it contained those four new songs, the title

track, "All You Need Is Love" (already issued as a single and on the US Magical Mystery Tour LP) and seven instrumental pieces composed by Martin. From late May to mid-October 1968, the group recorded what became The Beatles, a double LP commonly known as "The White Album" for its virtually featureless white cover. During this time, relations between the members grew openly divisive. Starr quit for two weeks, leaving his bandmates to record "Back in the U.S.S.R." and "Dear Prudence" as a trio. Lennon had lost interest in collaborating with McCartney, whose contribution "Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da" he scorned as "granny music shit". Tensions were further aggravated by Lennon's romantic preoccupation with avant-garde artist Yoko Ono, whom he insisted on bringing to the sessions despite the group's well-established understanding that girlfriends were not allowed in the studio.

McCartney has recalled that the album "wasn't a pleasant one to make". He and Lennon identified the sessions as the start of the band's break-up. Describing the double album, Lennon later said: "Every track is an individual track; there isn't any Beatles music on it. It's John and the band, Paul and the band, George and the band." Issued in November, the White Album attracted more than 2 million advance orders, selling nearly 4 million copies in the US in little over a month, and its tracks dominated the playlists of American radio stations. Its lyric content was the focus of much analysis by the counter-culture. Despite its popularity, reviewers were largely confused by the album's content, and it failed to inspire the level of critical writing that Sgt. Pepper had. General critical opinion eventually turned in favour of the White Album, and in 2003, Rolling Stone ranked it as the tenth greatest album of all time. Here's their rendering of Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= J9NpHKrKMw>

On 8 May 1970, "Let It Be" was released. Its accompanying single, "The Long and Winding Road", was the Beatles' last; it was released in the US, but not in the UK. "The Let It Be" documentary film followed later that month and would win the 1970 Academy Award for Best Original Song Score. Several reviewers stated that some of the performances in the film sounded better than their album tracks. Describing 'Let It Be' as the "only Beatles album to occasion negative, even hostile reviews", a critic called it "on the whole underrated"; he singles out "some good moments of straight hard rock in 'I've Got a Feeling' and 'Dig a Pony', and praises 'Let It Be', 'Get Back', and the folky 'Two of Us', with John and Paul harmonising together". McCartney filed a suit for the dissolution of the Beatles' contractual partnership on 31 December 1970. Legal disputes continued long after their break-up, and the dissolution was not formalised until 29 December 1974, when Lennon signed the paperwork terminating the partnership while on vacation with his family at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida. So the Beatles ended, never to gather again in the lifetimes of these men. Lennon, Harrison and Starr played together in various formations over the years, though only rarely did they record with McCartney. Once, when Eric Clapton married Harrison's former wife, Pattie Boyd; Paul, George and Ringo played live for a few impromptu minutes. Also, once, John and Paul played music together at somebody's Los Angeles studio in 1974, and Paul took a significant role in reuniting John and Yoko when they were separated during that same period. Lennon and McCartney, the most important song writing team in history, repaired their friendship somewhat over the years, though they stayed distant and never wrote together again.

Lennon was murdered in 1980. McCartney, Harrison and Starr reunited again as the Beatles in the mid-1990s to play some unfinished John Lennon tracks for The Beatles Anthology. Harrison died of lung cancer in 2001. Paul McCartney went on to become the richest man in show business. The story of the Beatles was always in some ways bigger than the Beatles, both the band and its individuals. It was the story of a time and of a generation reaching for new possibilities. It was the story of what happens when you reach those possibilities, and what happens when your best hopes come apart. Yes, it was a love story – and love is almost never a simple blessing. Because as much as the Beatles may have loved being together, the world around them loved it even more. That was the love that, more than anything, exalted the Beatles, but also hemmed them in with one another, and they could not withstand it. John Lennon, in particular, felt he had to break that love, and Paul McCartney hated to see it torn asunder. Once it was done though, it was done. Everything it made – every wonder – still resonates, but the hearts that made it happen also unmade it, and never truly recovered from the experience. "It was all such a long time ago,"

George Harrison said years later. "Sometimes I ask myself if I was really there or whether it was all a dream."

It has been said hundreds of times that the Beatles were probably the most influential band of all time. Only Elvis Presley's face is as well-known as the Beatles pictures, but the Fab Four's music is much more listened to nowadays than Elvis. They are indispensable for anyone who wants to study the history of pop music, but they are also unavoidable for anyone who is interested in modern British history and in British culture. In his essay "Eight Arms to Hold You," Hanif Kureshi says about the Beatles: "And certainly they're the only mere pop group you could remove from history and suggest that culturally, without them, things would have been significantly different. Knowing the Beatles is almost as important as knowing Shakespeare". Former Rolling Stone associate editor Robert Greenfield compared the Beatles to Picasso, as "artists who broke through the constraints of their time period to come up with something that was unique and original, in the form of popular music, no one will ever be more revolutionary, more creative and more distinctive". I'll end with my favourite of their songs, "The Long And Winding Road". In a way this sums up the Beatles for me. Their road was indeed long and winding and took in a remarkable journey through an ever changing and wonderful musical landscape.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fR4HjTH_fTM

If you're a Beatles fan there's a YouTube video, that's a must: The Beatles: a musical appreciation and analysis by composer, Howard Goodall CBE. Also look up the "Beatles Bible - Not quite as popular as Jesus" website for links to all the Beatles songs, plus plenty of interesting info. It's Fab and a must for all Beatles fans, like little old me. Check out the photos as well as the videos.

TOWN PUZZLES by Rob Wilkinson

See if you can work out the names of these places from the clues given, e.g. Sleepy place crosses river would give BEDFORD. Answers on page 26.

- 1 ONE PARENT IS HEALTHY
- 2 GIVE MONEY TO PORK
- 3 INTER AFTER HORSE'S FAST GAIT
- 4 OUTDOOR BOOT
- 5 4TH LETTER FALLS
- 6 MALE TORSO HAS QUEEN'S LETTERS
- 7 BUILD UP SUPPLIES NEAR QUAY
- 8 MODERN (?) DEFENSIVE FORT
- 9 CAKES IN LANCASHIRE
- 10 PIT WITH TOP PART OF BODY
- 11 SMALL CHILD WITH MOST OF FAMOUS LOCH
- 12 DARK LAKE
- 13 COMPASS POINT (? WARM) FINISHED
- 14 SAME COMPASS POINT BELOW GROUND
- 15 SHIP SUPPORT
- 16 HIGH ROCK WITH HARBOUR
- 17 LARGE BEAST OF BURDEN CROSSES RIVER
- 18 THIS BURNS BRIGHTLY IN NORTHERN SCOTLAND
- 19 GONE FOR A DRINK OF BEER
- 20 FAWLTY TOWERS MANAGER WITH ITALIAN CRIME LEADER

Pet Corner Quiz – Submitted by Barbara Phillips

1. The crew of which Battle of Trafalgar ship rescued a cat from drowning	a) HMS Ajax b) HMS Temeraire c) HMS Victory d) HMS Agamemnon
2. Which poet had a cat called Old Rumpelstilzchen?	a) Coleridge b) Lamb c) Southey d) Wordsworth
3. Which actor has a cat called Soymilk?	a) Michael Caine b) Ben Kingsley c) Gary Oldman d) Jeremy Irons
4. Who said “We come back from the store with chicken, pork, beef. Our dogs must think we are the world’s greatest hunters”?	a) Joyce Carol Oates b) Jayne Anne Phillips c) Marilynne Robson d) Anne Tyler
5. Who wrote an obituary about the family terrier, Shag?	a) Jean Rhys b) Agatha Christie c) Virginia Woolf d) Enid Blyton
6. Which poet had a Great Dane called Bounce?	a) William Blake b) John Clare c) John Keats d) Alexander Pope
7. Who kept Russian Blues in the Winter Palace?	a) Peter the Great b) Catherine the Great c) Alexander I d) Alexander II
8. Which naturalist had a fox terrier called Polly?	a) Joseph Banks b) Georges Cuvier c) Charles Darwin d) Ernst Haeckel
9. Who wrote that his cat’s meow “fills me with poems”?	a) Charles Beaudelaire b) Alphonse Daudet c) Stéphane Mallarmé d) Arthur Rimbaud
10. Which star shared his mansion with 12 cats?	a) Elvis Presley b) Michael Jackson c) Elton John d) Freddie Mercury

Answers are on page 13.

Do you want to send Christmas Greetings?

You may remember that I advised you that the local Scouts post delivery will not be taking place this year. This has certainly created something of a vacuum as the cost of sending Christmas cards by Royal Mail probably exceeds the cost of the card!

If you want to send a Christmas greeting to the members of any of our groups please let me know by the closing date for submission (see page 2) and I will include it in the DIT Christmas Special. Please note that greetings should be for a whole group and not individuals – I would have to print a special edition to do that!

Even More Nonsense!

Gerald's initial article in DIT25 seems to have struck a chord with a number of readers! Perhaps this sort of nonsense particularly appeals to the British sense of humour, and the richness of the English language does provide a whole host of words which rhyme, offering a multitude of possibilities!

Pam Cocchiara has submitted some Limericks using place names – always a fruitful source of inspiration!

A sailing enthusiast from Splott
At spelling wasn't too hot.
In a letter he wrote
He spoke of his boat
'Cos he didn't know how to spell yacht!

There was an old fellow from York
Whose manners gave rise to much talk.
To eat bread and cheese
He'd get down on his knees
And he'd always eat soup with a fork.

A young girl from Newport in Gwent
Spent some passionate nights with a gent,
Not in a motel
Or a five star hotel
But a tent in a field in Caerwent.

A man who came from the Azores
Kept his wife awake nights with his snores.
She'd nag and upbraid him
And finally made him
Sleep on a camp bed out of doors.

A greedy old fellow from Sutton
In his lifetime became such a glutton.
That so much did he eat
He lost sight of his feet
And on clothing he burst every button.

... and a further selection from various sources:

There was an old chap from Ponthir
Who could quickly drink ten pints of beer.
What goes in must come out
And his cronies, no doubt,
Raised a cheer for this champion pee-er!

There was an old farmer from Leeds
Who swallowed a packet of seeds.
It soon came to pass
He was covered in grass
But he has all the turnips he needs.

An elderly fellow called Keith
Mislaid his set of false teeth.
They'd been laid on a chair,
He forgot they were there,
He sat, and was bitten beneath.

There once was a lady named Pru
Who had nothing whatever to do.
She did it so badly
I thought she would gladly
Have finished before she was through.

There once was a runner called Dwight
Who could speed even faster than light.
He set out one day
In a relative way
And returned on the previous night.

An amoeba named Max and his brother
Were sharing a drink with each other;
In the midst of their quaffing,
They split themselves laughing,
And each of them now is a mother.

There once was a lady named Carys
Whom nothing could ever embarrass,
'Til the bath salts one day,
In the tub where she lay,
Turned out to be Plaster of Paris.

An oyster from Kalamazoo,
Confessed he was feeling quite blue.
For he said, "As a rule,
When the weather turns cool,
I invariably get in a stew."

There once was a girl in the choir
Whose voice rose up higher and higher,
Till it reached such a height
It went clear out of sight,
And they found it up on the church spire.

What We Were Doing . . . - Angela Robins

Two years ago Newport U3A celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a variety concert performed at Cwmbran's Congress Theatre by our very own members. This included humorous music and dance routines from the History and Out & About groups. We had recitations from individuals and the Geriatric Rap from the Creative Writing group. There was an 'Allo 'Allo comedy sketch from the French groups, and a potty (I mean potted) version of Cinderella from the Play Reading and Listening to Music groups.

The Easy Movement group proved how beneficial exercise is for us all and the Craft Group modelled their creations whilst strutting their stuff to the song 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion'.

The Line Dancers had us all clapping and tapping our feet as they moved to The Hilly Billy Rock.

Music was provided by the choir, the ever-colourful Ukulele Daze and by a bassoon (played humorously by Paul Green) and piano duet playing The Teddy Bears' Picnic and A Policeman's Lot is Not an 'Appy One.

Greg Platt, our M.C, eloquently introduced each act, whilst Stephen Berry and Pam Linton provided the piano accompaniment throughout. The much-appreciated refreshments were provided by our very own catering staff during the interval.

Many of us had never trod the boards before but we left the theatre happy and giggling with a great feeling of achievement and exhilaration.

None of this would have been possible without the excellent planning and management from Jackie Kerr, Pat Fackrell, Jan Howell and Richard Baines (with his assistant Gill Berry).





-----X-----

At Newport U3A's 25th Anniversary Variety Concert Jan Howell, the Front of House Manager, noticed **Euan** lolling across three seats that were reserved for Production Members. Jan said "Come along Euan, we are fully booked so you can only have your one seat, to which Euan just rolled his eyes.

Jan went for help from Richard Baines, the Theatre Technician, who also urged Euan to move and let the members have their seats, to which Euan again rolled his eyes.

"That's it, Euan, I'm going to get Jackie Kerr the Show's Manager - she'll sort you out!"

Jackie asked Euan "What is your problem! You are being very inconsiderate taking up these people's seats, where did you come from?" to which Euan lifted a weak hand into the air and said "The balcony . . ."

-----X-----

Pets Corner (page 9) - Answers:

1. HMS Ajax
2. Southey
3. Gary Oldman
4. Anne Tyler
5. Virginia Woolf
6. Alexander Pope
7. Catherine the Great
8. Charles Darwin
9. Charles Beaudelaire
10. Freddie Mercury

50 Mile Challenge - Portishead by Mike Brown

Portishead is a well-kept secret – well, it was from me! Driving along the M5, I had always assumed that Portishead was an industrial area like Avonmouth: how wrong can one be! Think Penarth and Roath Park combined. Even when driving into the town, there are no signposts to give you a clue that this is a seaside resort, until you are almost on the promenade. I got the feeling that this is a haven for the residents alone! This coastal town on the Severn estuary has grown dramatically in recent years and can be split into three areas - The Seafront, The Marina and The Shopping Centre.

The Seafront is a reminder of a gentile Victorian era, with sweeping views across the Bristol Channel towards . . . Newport! It doesn't have a sandy beach but rocks and a salt-marsh (like Laugharne). Leisure facilities include cricket, tennis, bowling, a lido and a boating lake. There is ample roadside parking and free car parks. The promenade leads to a promontory called Battery Point that has views along the channel towards the Severn Bridges. Huge ships that to and fro at Avonmouth Docks pass closer to land here than anywhere else in Britain. Here also is the start of a circular Woodland Walk passing several large houses clinging to the cliff; the older ones I can imagine once belonged to sea captains.

The Marina has evolved from the historical fishing port and can hold 300 boats. It has dozens of modern apartments and there is also a trail of many art installations created by world class artists.

The Victorian Shopping Centre has an old-fashioned atmosphere with an eclectic mix of independent traders, high street shops and chain stores. It purports to have a stunning Christmas Lights Display that is the best in the U.K.

Dotted around the area are attractive parks and gardens, pubs, cafes and restaurants.



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

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

Readers have been enjoying **Martyn Vaughan's** stories throughout the span of Desert Island Times. For this edition he has provided us with two examples of SUDDEN FICTION (no more than 750 words) and one of FLASH FICTION (no more than 1500 words). I am amazed that an author can tell a story in fewer words than I would use in an average letter! Thank you for yet another insight into Creative Writing, Martyn.

Sudden Fiction

It Happened Just As The Clock Struck Midnight...

They weren't going! – I couldn't stand these people anymore. How dare they come into my house like this – as if they actually owned the place?

I stared at them one by one: the fat middle-aged bloke with the comb-over; the bottle blond woman who'd had one too many facelifts, which had left her looking permanently surprised; the obnoxious twins who had spent all evening running around, shrieking and trying to make the other cry – all too successfully, unfortunately. It was all very depressing. What was the world coming to, I wondered. How was it such an unprepossessing lot could have amassed enough money to think they could move into an area like mine?

I looked again at the man as he drank yet another glass of wine. I watched his jowls quiver as he slurped the stuff down. He looked like the type who would be happier with a pint of wallop down at the "Dog and Duck", where he would spend all evening giving everyone his opinions on where the Prime Minister had gone wrong or how the local football team had been robbed of promotion.

The screaming twins ran past me and collided violently with the dining room table. The glasses on it quivered violently, and I was certain that one was going to fall onto the plush carpet.

I directed a silent frown at them but only the cat noticed and uttered a kind of strangled noise, which made the woman turn to look at it and give it a consoling pat.

I tried walking up to them and remonstrating in their faces, but they looked straight through me.

I gave up – how dispiriting to be haunting your own house when only the cat can see you.

How to Take Care of Your Pets

'Aren't they cute!' she said, leaning over above their box and watching them scurry away into the corners at her sudden appearance. 'So soft and tiny and cuddly!'

'And quite intelligent, too,' her friend said, 'see how they've built themselves a little group of dwellings in that corner. I gave them some straw and mud and they made it all by themselves.'

'How about those baby ones you were going to give me?' the first one pressed.

'Oh yes,' her friend replied, 'they've had some new ones recently.'

She leaned over and picked up some of the tiny babies. 'Look at the mother,' she cooed, 'trying to get them back. She can't understand that we won't hurt them.'

She placed them in one of the cups of her friend's third anterior tentacle.

'And to think,' she wondered, raising herself to her full height of seventy-five metres, 'that when we first came to this planet, evolution had stopped at these little things. Remember how they shot at us with their silly weapons?'

'Yes,' her friend breathed, staring in wonder at the wriggling babies, 'humans really are cute!'

Flash Fiction

Retail Pursuit

John stared angrily at the shop keeper. His arms were behind his back and he tried the bonds once again, and he felt them slightly loosen. The shopkeeper was clearly not that adept at tying knots. Still, it was too soon to make his move. He'd have to wait for the moment.

Ignoring the shopkeeper's threats, which he'd heard several times already, he looked around at the shop again.

All the shelves were overflowing with unsold items: toy trains, plastic machine guns, cowboy outfits, construction kits for building a plastic miniature of a WWII bomber; partly assembled doll's houses...It just went on and on. And in the corner was one of those huge teddy-bears; the kind that is almost the size of an adult human.

John didn't like that teddy-bear: there's was something about its expression...

The shopkeeper was speaking again. 'Now, be reasonable sir. We've all got to make a living. Just buy something and I'll let you go.'

John looked up at the man; he was well past middle-age, corpulent and seemed permanently out of breath. Every sentence ended in a wheeze.

If it came to violence, John was sure he'd come out on top.

'Look,' the man said, 'I'll tell you again: ever since the pandemic, it's the law—if you walk into a shop you must buy something. I'm within my rights to keep you here until you do.'

'And, I'll tell you again,' John replied, giving the string around his wrists another twist, 'I only came in here to ask the way to the bus stop. This is a toy shop. I don't want any toys. I don't need any toys. I'm 37—I haven't played with toys for over eighteen months.' And then he added the final rebuff. 'And I don't have any grandchildren. And even if I did, they'd be too intelligent to be interested in the kind of tat you have in this place!'

That hurt: John could see that he had hit home.

'So that's the way you want to play it,' the shopkeeper said, in a tone which revealed barely-suppressed anger, 'well, we'll see about that. Modern toys have changed a bit since the pandemic. Here, try this.' And he picked a large doll off the shelf and held it in front of John's face.

John looked at the doll. And to his horrified surprise, the doll's head rotated so it was face on to him and its eyelids flickered open, revealing china-blue eyes.

'Hello, mister,' the doll said, 'I like you. Are you going to buy me?'

John was too shocked to speak for a minute or two and then he said, 'No, I'm not.'

The doll's face contorted and a little hand struck him across the face. 'Bad man!' the doll shrieked.

The shop keeper replaced the doll and looked at John.

'Changed your mind yet?' he asked, with a note of satisfaction in his voice.

'No,' John said, 'I do not want to buy a toy. I don't agree with this crazy law. I will not buy a toy, do you hear me!'

The man disappeared behind a block of shelves and came back with a plastic model of a tyrannosaurus rex. It was about 4 feet high and seemed quite heavy by the way he was carrying it. He dumped it in John's lap and John stared at it. Its head was very realistic and it had an open mouth, revealing dagger-like teeth. So he was not surprised when its eyes opened and its jaws moved. 'Hello human,' it said, 'in a hissing, snake-like voice, 'do you want to buy me?'

John found the creature's reptilian gaze distinctly alarming, but he held to his principles.

'No,' he said firmly, 'I do not want to buy you.' The T.Rex bent forward and bit him on the shoulder. It was quite painful.

The shopkeeper took it off John's lap and shook his head. 'People like you,' he said, 'just free-loaders. Not doing their bit to help the country get back on its feet. Well, there's a way of dealing with parasites like you.'

He placed the plastic dinosaur on the table next to John and disappeared into the back of the shop. John could hear him rummaging about back there.

It's now or never! John thought.

He gave his bound hands another twist and felt the string slide down one hand. One more twist and he was free of the chair. He leapt to his feet.

Just in time: the shopkeeper reappeared and in his hands was what looked like a plastic battle-axe. At least, John hoped it was plastic.

John never found out: one kick sent the man and his weapon, real or otherwise, flying. John spun around, triumphant.

To find the doorway blocked by the large teddy bear. The fluffy toy was not much smaller than John. Its eyelids rose, revealing bright red eyes.

'Buy me,' it said, in what could only be described as a threatening growl, 'buy me.'

John had to act fast. Acting instinctively he reached for the plastic T. rex and flung it at the bear. As it hit the bear he heard the little dinosaur say, 'Buy me!'

Taking advantage of the bear's confusion, John smashed the door open and ran out onto the pavement.

But it was exit: pursued by a bear.

Wordsearches submitted by Barbara Phillips

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

No. 1 Can you find 12 dog breeds in this grid?

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

No. 2 Can you find the 13 words associated with HOCKEY in the grid below?

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

Answers are on page 24

British Light Music 2 – Albert Ketèlbey (the Thomas Cook of Music) - by Stephen Berry

Albert Ketelbey (no accent on the second 'e' at the time of his birth!) was born on 9th August 1875 in Aston, then a separate place just to the north of Birmingham. His father, George Henry, and mother, Sarah Ann (née Aston) had married in 1873 and Albert was their second child. George, like his father, was a jewellery engraver, the family having moved from London in the 1820s. The surname is rare and crops up only in Shropshire and Sussex (from the late 1600s) and in the capital. George later became the Art Master at the Hockley School of Art and he also became a jewellery designer and a silversmith.

Although Albert was the most famous of the children, his younger brother, George, also displayed a talent for music and became a virtuoso violinist. Spending the early years of his career in Brighton as a violin teacher and orchestral player, he was persuaded in 1923 to emigrate to Durban, South Africa, to become leader of the newly-formed Civic Orchestra. Their youngest sibling, Doris, became an academic and taking a degree at Somerville College, Oxford, ensured that she was offered various appointments as a lecturer in modern history. Her final appointment was as senior lecturer at St Andrew's University, Fife.

Both parents were interested in music and keen amateurs. Albert showed early promise and piano lessons were arranged from quite an early age. However, money was tight and the local pawnbroker often took possession of the piano on a "ticket-of-retained-possession" in order to pay for his lessons. At the age of 11 he became a student at the Birmingham School of Music and, two years later, his results were considered "exceptionally praiseworthy" – a 1st class in advanced harmony. He also composed a piano sonata which he performed in a public concert. In the audience was one, Edward Elgar, who, although he was yet to achieve national and international fame, was sufficiently famous for the praise that he lavished on the work and the performance to be reported. The following year saw him apply for the three-year Queen Victoria Scholarship for Composition at Trinity College of Music in London – he was still only 13 years old and he won it comfortably, beating no other than Gustav Holst (of "Planets Suite" fame) into second place. Apart from Composition he studied both piano and organ to professional level, cello and horn to a high level of proficiency and flute, oboe and clarinet to a good working level. In London he boarded with Mr & Mrs Alfred Hoare, whose daughter Florence was later to become a talented song writer, writing the lyrics for no less than 37 of Albert's early songs.

He renewed the Scholarship by winning it again when he was 16, at which point he also became organist at St John's Church, Wimbledon. His time at Trinity College was very fruitful and many of his larger student compositions received both public performances, medals and prizes, the icing on the cake being his winning the coveted Sir Michael Costa Prize for his Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn and Piano, which also won him the College Gold Medal.

It now seemed certain that Albert's future lay in the composition of "serious" music and concert performances, as his virtuosity as a pianist was recognised, particularly in London and Birmingham. However, after completing his second scholarship (at the age of 20) he was offered an opportunity in the variety theatre as Musical Director to a newly-formed light opera company. This probably came as a result of his being "spotted" at work, as he undertook various short-term contracts playing in theatre orchestras while still at Trinity. He took to the work "as a duck to water" and his talents were soon widely recognised. Just two years later he was offered the full-time MD post at the Opera Comique in London, the youngest MD in London.

Despite his work in the theatre he continued to compose – serious music and theatre music – and also conducted examinations for Trinity College. It was as well that he had other sources of income as disaster came suddenly when the Opera Comique suffered financial disaster and closed suddenly. However, fortune smiled again. One of his main publishers was Hammond & Co and they required a competent arranger to make reduced versions of orchestral works for small orchestra and other combinations of instruments and also for piano and organ solo. This was work that Albert could and did carry out easily

and successfully. Similar work was carried out for another major publisher, Chappell & Co, and he continued doing similar work until the early 1920s.

On 27th August 1906 Albert married Charlotte (Lottie) Siegenberg. Although of Jewish extraction, the family integrated fully into London life and neither Christian nor Jewish ideology interfered with family life. Indeed, a number of Lottie's siblings changed their surnames; her brother took the surname "Curzon" and his son, Clifford, achieved international fame as a concert pianist. In an interview, Sir Clifford Curzon readily admitted the influence his uncle (by marriage) had on his musical development.

The following year he took on a job that, at the time, was considered ill-advised and a great risk. The recording industry was very much in its infancy and was largely focussed on songs, ballads, operatic arias and popular music hall numbers. The Columbia Record Company needed an arranger for its studio orchestra – no easy task because the recording studio was a cramped area into which a piano and some twelve orchestral instruments (whatever was available on the day) were crammed in absolute discomfort. It needed an expert to provide, at short notice, orchestral parts which made sense. Many instruments would not record at all and had to be substituted with an instrument of roughly the same pitch. Albert's experience of arranging at Hammonds fitted him admirably for the role and his conducting ability led to Columbia employing him as their "house" conductor. At this time they started to produce rudimentary recordings of orchestral works – usually drastically cut down to fit the length of a 78rpm record, something else that needed Albert's attention. He was never credited on record labels of the period, but it is likely that he conducted the first cut version of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony. His great knowledge and friendly disposition endeared him to all orchestral players, a real asset when situations were tense and tempers could so easily fray!

At this point in his career he had composed a large number of "serious" songs and instrumental pieces, many lighter numbers for theatre and one full-length light opera, "The Wonder Worker", which is more in the vein of Edward German than Arthur Sullivan. He was extremely busy and earning a substantial income. The 1911 Census shows that he and Lottie were living at 73 West Cromwell Road, Kensington, with a resident servant. The house (demolished in a road widening scheme of the 1960s) was impressive – 12 rooms excluding the usual "offices" and Albert describes himself as a Musical Composer, Conductor and Editor, working on his own account for music publishers and recording companies. Indeed, at this stage he might have thought that his future was well mapped out, but the following year was to provide a chance opportunity which he took – and which, ultimately, changed the future direction of his life.

A very famous cellist of the era, Auguste van Biene had, some 20 years earlier, composed a piece for solo cello and piano called "The Broken Melody" and in 1912 he launched a competition for a companion piece to it. Albert obviously saw, or was shown this, and produced a piece which he called "The Phantom Melody". He won the competition easily and carried off the relatively small financial rewards this brought; the real prize, though, was the interest in the piece shown by several music publishers and, following an orchestral arrangement made shortly afterwards, the piece shot to fame. However, before he could develop these talents further, he was called upon to provide a more permanent set of "mood" pieces for use by yet another new phenomenon – the cinema orchestra. In those early days of movies the films were silent and the orchestra was required to provide appropriate music to suit the action. He had no problem in dealing with this commission and, indeed, he provided many short pieces over the next few years.

Although it was not apparent at the time, the major event that changed the direction of his career had actually taken place two years earlier. Albert was invited by a close friend, Joseph Larway, to accompany him on a visit to his brother, who had recently become a novice friar at Chilworth in Surrey. Albert was very moved by the peace and tranquility of the gardens of the monastery and this remained with him to the point where he sketched out a piece of piano music. Nothing more happened for two years, when one of the Columbia house orchestra players, who, during the summer conducted his own orchestra at Bridlington, asked Albert if he could write a romantic piece for his orchestra. Albert was busy, so he took out his sketch and made an orchestral version of his piece which he named "In a Monastery Garden". It proved popular with orchestra and audiences alike and it was included in the following two years' seasons

as well. By now it was becoming so popular that it became necessary to publish it to satisfy public demand. Albert was not prepared to let this happen in the current form and it was 1915 before it was issued to the public – in a short time, sales had exceeded 100,000. Within ten years sales had exceeded 1 million. This piece is probably his most well-known composition and certainly one of his most popular.

The period from 1915 to 1918 saw Albert heavily engaged in theatre work – the citizens of London were only too happy to frequent performances to take their minds off the horrors of WW1. As a result, composition took something of a back seat. The cessation of hostilities gave him more time for these activities and his reputation had grown to such an extent that he could choose who he wanted to publish his future compositions. Although he had to complete a few contracts for existing publishers, he decided in 1919, to entrust non-contracted works to Bosworth & Co who, besides London, had branches in Brussels and Leipzig. They had excellent printing facilities which enabled them to print the beautifully coloured covers which were a great aid to sales, and an excellent advertising team to promote sales throughout Europe. They published their first title, “In the Moonlight”, in 1919, but the following year saw another popular piece, “Wedgwood Blue”, followed by Albert’s second most famous composition, “In a Persian Market”.

Up until this point (roughly halfway through Albert’s life) it had been possible – and logical – to deal with events in a fairly strict chronological order. From 1920 to 1940, though, there was little point in doing so as his two “golden decades” of composition saw a large output, ably promoted by Bosworths, and a fairly consistent work schedule year-on-year. For this period, then, I’ll concentrate on aspects of his compositions and yearly activities.

In the title to this article I gave Albert the title “The Thomas Cook of Music” – it’s not an official one and I have never seen it used elsewhere, but it does seem appropriate, as at least 16 pieces took us to particular places across the world and attempted to describe in music the country or area implied. We might increase it to 17 by adding In a Monastery Garden, the other 16 being:

In a Persian Market; Bells across the Meadows [England – probably Aston]; A Desert Romance; In a Chinese Temple Garden; Cockney Suite; In a Camp of the Ancient Britons [Worlebury Camp, Weston-Super-Mare]; Algerian Scene; Jungle Drums; Three Fanciful Etchings [English countryside]; By the Blue Hawaiian Waters; The Vision of Fuji-San [Japan]; In the Mystic Land of Egypt; Sunday Afternoon Reverie (England); With the Roumanian Gypsies; In Holiday Mood [UK]; Italian Twilight.

In 1926 Albert resigned his position as Musical Director and Adviser to Columbia, taking with him the house orchestra to form the Albert W Ketèlbey Concert Orchestra. The orchestra not only made records but also toured the country throughout the year and made regular appearances at provincial festivals. They undertook an extensive European Concert Tour in 1929 and in the following year gave the first of, what was to become throughout the 1930s, an annual concert at the Kingsway Hall in London. During this year Albert began a long association with the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall and marches became more of a feature amongst his compositions. These were written for brass and military bands, although they were simultaneously issued as orchestral and piano solo versions.

The advent of electric recording in 1925 and the ever-increasing popularity of radio, did much to bring his music to a huge audience and he achieved the status of millionaire with the royalties that every hearing and sale of music earned. He was, however, extremely generous and gave much away to good causes.

Though in his theatre days his short pieces were “recycled” according to need, the few of us who made a study of all of Albert’s music were aware of rather greater reuses of themes. The most recent research has shown that many snippets of melody from these early days were later to reappear in a totally different context in works of the 1920s and 1930s. One of the most startling was to be found in the pastoral suite, Three Fanciful Etchings; some of the themes had previously appeared in piano pieces descriptive of an industrial landscape! The startling thing is that the themes sound perfectly apt in both settings. Towards the end of his career, Albert revised and reissued some of his early serious songs – not always improved, in my opinion!

The advent of war in 1939 wrought change for everyone and concert tours and even organised performances were severely curtailed. Apart from a few marches composed in the first few years, only two other compositions were produced. He was still involved in musical activities but became a special constable and took up his wartime duties seriously. The jubilations of 1945 were followed by the dreadful winter of 1946-47 and, early in 1947, disaster struck when Albert and Lottie's house in Hampstead was flooded, the severe frost having caused a burst water main. Much of his library of books, music scores and other papers were destroyed in the flood and their efforts to salvage what they could of their possessions left them both seriously ill with pneumonia. On 18th February 1947 they were both rushed to Regents Park Nursing Home where, two days later, Lottie died. Although Albert recovered, the tragedy of losing so much, caused a nervous breakdown and he ultimately decided to sell his house and move into a hotel.

His GP persuaded him to spend a period of recuperation on the south coast of England. It was while he was staying in a hotel in Bournemouth that he had an altercation with the manageress, Mrs Maud Pritchett. He had sought her permission to have a piano in his room, a request she denied as it might upset other guests. Things apparently got quite heated – but were ultimately resolved satisfactorily as they were married on 30th October 1948 in Bournemouth Registry Office!

They moved to a bungalow on Egypt Hill in West Cowes on the Isle of Wight and enjoyed around 10 years here before moving to a flat overlooking the Solent at the bottom of Egypt Hill. During the 1950s Albert composed only seven new orchestral pieces; one was never published and has not been discovered; and another was a modified arrangement of a piece composed in the 1940s for Brass Band (Adventurers Overture). The remainder are Angelo d'Amore (1949), Italian Twilight (1951), Springtime Calls (1952 – recycling some older material), Alpine Serenade (1956) and, his final composition, The Swiss Dancing Doll (1958). This is a mixed bunch – Angelo d'Amore and Italian Twilight are by far the best, though Swiss Dancing Doll is a charming, if short, piece. All three can be heard in my synthesised versions (see below).

Albert died in his sleep in the early hours of 26th November 1959, so bringing to an end his era of light music and of the composer capable of producing music across the spectrum.

I have spent around 55 years researching Albert Ketèlbey and his music, in conjunction with Tom McCanna, former Music Librarian at Sheffield University. We have, between us, copies of most of his compositions and many recordings, and much of our work has been uploaded to the official Albert Ketèlbey website, accessed at <http://www.albertketelbey.org.uk> - a veritable mine of information! Many pieces have never been recorded and Tom and I have endeavoured to plug gaps with synthesised recordings. These can be found at <http://www.albertketelbey.org.uk/synthesised.html> where you will find many hours of listening – but please read the short introduction at the top of the page! My own researches have been conducted on the Isle of Wight and at Trinity College of Music (I am an ATCL, my original teaching certificate for the piano) and other researches in London took me to his publishers and the BBC Music Library. I have spoken at length to his widow Mabel and sister Doris and other IoW people who knew him well, all of which served to fire my interest in this most entertaining of composers.

During the 12 year period when I conducted Newport Concert Orchestra I included at least one Ketèlbey piece in every concert, one concert being entirely devoted to his music! Rehearsing and conducting it gave me fresh insight into the music and Albert's wonderful gifts of composition and orchestration.

Some suggested listening

Philharmonia Orchestra cond. John Lanchberry https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCHx-5_rU5c

In a Monastery Garden (1915) ([00:00](#))

In a Persian Market (1920) ([05:35](#))

Chal Romano - Gypsy Lad (1924) ([11:22](#))

In the Mystic Land of Egypt (1931) ([21:02](#)) [Disappointing - the music is cut – see below for alternative]

The Clock and the Dresden Figures (1930) ([26:52](#))

Bells Across the Meadow (1921) ([31:00](#))

In a Chinese Temple Garden (1923) ([35:49](#))

In the Moonlight (1919) ([42:57](#))

Sanctuary of the Heart (1924) ([47:55](#))

<http://www.albertketelbey.org.uk/music78albums.html>

Albert W Ketèlbey's Concert Orchestra conducted by Ketèlbey

In a Monastery Garden (1915)	In a Chinese Temple Garden (1923)
In a Persian Market (1920)	Cockney Suite (1924)
Sanctuary of the Heart (1924)	Jungle Drums
Three Fanciful Etchings (1926)	The Phantom Melody (1912)
Chal Romano (1924)	Algerian Scene
In a Fairy Realm (1928)	By the Blue Hawaiian Waters
Bells across the Meadows (1921)	Men of England
	In a Camp of the Ancient Britons
In Holiday Mood (1938)	Sunbeams and Butterflies (1938)

Other recordings

Vision of Fuji-San (1931) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYLzXnzBWwA>
In the Mystic Land of Egypt (1931) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G0biVs7Jms>
Cockney Suite 5. Bank Holiday – ‘Appy ‘Ampstead <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRoiZBFjDhE>
With Honour Crowned – Coronation March (1935) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovodpQsolew>
The Phantom Melody (1912) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0itlgALf3sI>

Happy listening!

In DIT 26 I said that **Trevor Duncan** is probably best-known for the first movement of his “Little Suite”, which was used as the signature tune of a famous BBC series of the 1960s, with music from the other movements also being used at appropriate times during the various episodes.

Unusually nobody responded to the challenge to name the series! It was Dr Finlay’s Casebook, that was produced and broadcast by the BBC from 1962 until 1971. Based on A. J. Cronin’s 1935 novella Country Doctor, the storylines centred on a general medical practice in the fictional Scottish town of Tannochbrae during the late 1920s. Cronin was the primary writer for the show between 1962 and 1964. The main characters were Dr Finlay, the junior partner in the practice, Dr Cameron, the craggy senior partner, and Janet, their unflappable housekeeper and receptionist at Arden House. Other recurrent characters included Dr Snoddie, Finlay’s crusty detractor and Janet’s admirer, and gossipy Mistress Niven, the district nurse and midwife.

As with most television series many locations were used in the filming. The original series was filmed in the town of Callander (Perthshire), but the very first six episodes were filmed in Tannoch Drive, Milngavie (Dumbartonshire), where the fictional Arden House was situated on the right-hand side as one approaches Tannoch Loch. Other outdoor scenes were filmed in Kilbarchan (Renfrewshire), where Church Street in particular has changed little since filming took place.

To add further confusion to the mix, Dr Finlay is occasionally seen reading the “Ayrshire Times”!!!

Although it wasn’t my intention to start off a new challenge, I never look a gift horse in the mouth!

What were the TV series of your (and our!) youth? They don’t have to be memorable for any music but if you can say something about the series and why you enjoyed it, I am sure it will be of interest to our readers. As always, a few sentences will do if you don’t want to write an article!

Wordsearches (page 19) - Answers

Dogs:

Husky. Corgi. Poodle. Boxer. Dalmation. Saluki. Retriever. Beagle. Labrador. Pug. Chow. Lurcher.

Hockey:

Ball. Flag. Penalty. Tackle. Shoot. Pitch. Attack. Goalie. Obstruct. Stick. Pass. Net. Defend.

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 26

Dave Woolven has again come up with the correct answer for the first photograph. It shows those shops on the corner of Chepstow Road and Rochester Road. This road bisected two blocks of shops which formed one of those small out-of-town shopping centres that could be seen across the town. I knew this one particularly well as I spent four years as a pupil at Eveswell Boys School (just across the road from this spot) and many pennies passed over various counters here! There was a butcher and a baker (an ironmonger's shop standing in for the candlestick maker!), a greengrocer, an electrical shop, a hairdresser, a newsagent and sweet shop, a chemist, two grocers, a wool shop and a fish and chip shop. The one grocery shop was adjacent to the pedestrian crossing outside the school gates and, since they also sold sweets, they received much of our custom! The fish and chip shop had us in its sights as well, though, as they offered a 2d bag of chips or a 1d bag of "scrumps" – the scraps of batter which had come away from the pieces of fish during frying and soaked in fat. Needless to say it is no longer legal to sell these "heart-attacks-waiting-to-happen" though we know of one fish and chip shop in Hartlepool will give them to you at your own risk!

The second photograph was extremely difficult and I would have been amazed if an identification was forthcoming! The building was a tin church which, when photographed, stood on Dock Street roughly at the spot where the Octopus Bridge was to be built later. It was a chapel-of-ease in the parish of St Paul, serving the area around George Street. The land was owned by the Great Western Railway and they needed it in connection with an expansion scheme. There was, at the time, no suitable site on which to relocate it and it was sold to the parish of Maindee. Within a few years a new mission room had been opened in nearby Granville Street – and also one in New Ruperra Street. But why did Maindee want a tin church?

The continuing expansion of the Maindee district opened up the area known as Barnardtown, around Church Road. This was a good distance away from their parish church and, to address this problem, a site was acquired on the corner of Church Road and Bishop Street where a "neat building, made to look like two cottages" was erected and opened on 3rd December 1876. This building still exists in Bishop Street. The curate of St John's church was in charge of services and pastoral work in Barnardtown, and, encouraged by the vicar of St John's, he conducted services in the High Church tradition, despite a certain amount of opposition. However, the next vicar held completely opposite views and, in March 1882, he closed the mission and dispensed with the assistance of his curate. The need for a place of worship in Barnardtown was great, though, and the vicar of St John's, after only three months, obtained the tin church from Dock Street and this was re-erected on the site on the corner of Church Road and Hereford Street, where, in 1891, the stone church was subsequently built (and recently demolished!)

It might be thought that the tin church at St Matthew was now redundant but this was not the case. Caerleon Road and its offshoots in the Durham Road area were being developed and our tin church was again dismantled and re-erected in Durham Road, being opened in December of that year as St Julian's Mission. St Julians finally became a parish on 4th October 1921 and, although it was in a convenient location for serving many of its parishioners, there was no room for expansion on the Durham Road site. A new site was found at the top of St Julian's Avenue, in a part of the parish which was just beginning to be developed. In 1926 the parish church of SS Julius and Aaron was opened on this site. The former site is now occupied by the modern health centre, the tin church then being used as the parish hall.

There is every possibility that this tin building was produced by Lysaghts at its Orb Works – they produced a huge range of such buildings which were sold around the globe. It is fascinating to see the scale of recycling and how this small building served the ecclesiastical needs of three parishes over the 100 or so years of its life in the town.

... and this edition's challenges!



The first photograph shows a scene which is barely recognisable today. Location and any memories of this area, please? The second is less difficult than usual and is still at least partially recognisable. Where is it and can you add any further information about this area?

Answers to Town Puzzles (page 8)

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 Motherwell | 2 Grantham | 3 Canterbury | 4 Wellington | 5 Dover | 6 Manchester |
| 7 Stockport | 8 Newcastle | 9 Eccles | 10 Minehead | 11 Totnes | 12 Blackpool |
| 13 Southend | 14 Sunderland | 15 Hull | 16 Torquay | 17 Camelford | |
| 18 Wick | 19 Burton | 20 Basildon | | | |