

Long enough to have a baby!

Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Are we going to get the vaccine?

Will I see my mother at Christmas?

The answers to these questions are: “Yes, but it’s a train coming down the line towards us; Probably but it could be a long wait; Not likely because she died twenty-three years ago!

A bit flippant but there you have in essence the culmination of our concerns over the past nine months. You are now reading Hoover 9 and no prizes for guessing the number of times that this temporary newsletter has been published. Smart money says that we shall reach double figures perhaps completing a year before we get back to normal.

However, it’s going to be a strange Christmas with families apart and festivities governed by Government decree but no doubt there will still be something to enjoy.

We know that one Father Christmas has hung up his boots and reindeer and is looking forward to quieter time – but will he be completely happy with out the kids and the dressing up – *having hair was always a bonus!*



Should be Good News?

To all members, I am writing this on one of the dullest mornings when all the news is about the Covid vaccine, which should be good news but the media always have to spoil it by talking about all the possible negatives.

For example, why are we the first country to be rolling out the Vaccinations for the most vulnerable? Is the Vaccine safe? I am sure the discussions will last for days and doubtless many of us will be switching to programmes that give us some relief from the never ending bad news — programmes that provide us with some escape to something more entertaining, even if they are mostly repeats. Sorry, this negativity seems to be catching.

For those of you who have access to the internet I can advise that during lockdown Meg has managed to find someone who has updated our Website, the committee decided that the old web site was very dated and in need of improvement and so approved the necessary expenditure.

Meg has kindly installed some more updated photographs provided by various members illustrating us enjoying ourselves in happier circumstances. I hope you will take a look at the Website and see how many of your friends you can find in the photo galleries for the various Group activities.

Meg also introduced us to Mirthy Talks who produce online talks which are available, for free, for anyone to join every Thursday. We have watched a couple of these and found them to be interesting and in the case of the life story of Princess Grace of Monaco very enlightening. You can register for the Thursday talks on this link: <https://mirthy.co.uk/talks/>

We would like to find out if our members are interested in watching a programme especially shown for our Club. This will cost the Club just £50 on each occasion. Please let us know if you are interested.

Finally, I do hope you are all keeping well and coping with the restrictions that currently affect us all, and I very much look forward to seeing you all hopefully sooner rather than later.

With very Best Wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year, regards,

DAVID



Members and Cars

Following Barbara Brooks' story last month about her kit car we now have Jan Rowling reminiscing about her travels in a Morris 8

In 1960 a year that would see John F. Kennedy become president and Chubby Checker release *The Twist* my boy friend and I went on holiday together. I was 18 and had just become engaged to a Battersea lad who at 20 was the owner of a motor car for the first time.

Sixty years on it is difficult to convey the excitement of suddenly having the independence and the means to travel anywhere and when asked by our parents where we were going we answered: "To Scotland!" It's so long ago that even Scotland was exciting.

My fiancé was more ambitious than cautious and the thoughts of taking a car five years older than himself on an unplanned trip to the other end of the country didn't seem to worry him.

On reflection it didn't seem to worry me either but I soon found out that his navigational skills were basic as we travelled on the premise of pointing the car towards the North while keeping the sea on our right hand side. Save for a detour along the River Humber for sixty miles to Goole, to find a bridge as the estuary ferry was out of action, the plan worked rather well and we would be in Edinburgh within three days.

We found interesting places along the way like Skegness, Scarborough and Newcastle but found difficulty in finding places to stay overnight. We relied on finding B&Bs for accommodation but this did not always work out as landladies seemed reluctant to take in single couples so we either stayed in separate lodgings or slept in the car.

There's not the remotest hint of romance in sleeping in a Morris 8 or waking up surrounded by sheep at six o'clock in the morning on a Yorkshire moor but we were young and still had a lot to learn mainly about one-another.

One thing I did learn was that although the car ran fairly well, if there was a hold up in the traffic the petrol pump got overheated and packed up. My job was to get out and lift the bonnet to give the pump a good whack. He called it a technical tap!

An object lesson for life: There are other places where a technical tap comes in handy.



JAN ROWLING

[as related to our Foreign Affairs' Correspondent]

Out with the mobile



Our resident photographers have been out again.

Min Gardiner has this picture of Stroud Pond “filling nicely” whilst June Turner out for an autumn walk with our member Christine Pibworth took her photograph.

June said that they spent so much time chatting that she did not notice the wonderful scenery until she looked at the picture when she got back.



Reminder Membership Fees

Another reminder from our Treasurer Meg that the membership fees are due by 1st January.

Please pay by BACS if at all possible or by cheque to Blackwater Valley U3A.

Your renewal will be extended up to the end of March 2021, in recognition of the fact that Covid 19 restrictions have impacted on our normal activities during this year, but these will be resumed as soon as circumstances allow.

Fees are again £12 for the year

How about a Quiz?

"Here again with more questions asked
of names and places from the past"

General knowledge

- 1) What creature proved faster than a horse in a 1927 race in Sydney Australia?
- 2) What is the longest river in the world?
- 3) Which was the first city to have a population of over 10 million?
- 4) In Chinese mythology, which tree is "The Tree of Life"?
- 5) What did a South Korean theatre owner edit out of "The Sound of Music" to shorten it?
- 6) What is produced from bauxite?
- 7) Which Rudyard Kipling poem greets competitors before they enter Centre Court at Wimbledon?
- 8) Who wrote the "Discworld" series of fantasy novels?
- 9) The Kiwi fruit is native to which country?
- 10) What is the southernmost capital city in the world?
- 11) Where is St Basil's Cathedral?
- 12) In which year was the country name of "Siam" first replaced by "Thailand"?
- 13) What planet has a day two-thirds as long as it's year?
- 14) What does a spemologer collect?
- 15) What comes after the lines "Yesterday, love was an easy game to play"?

Arranged by the Blackwater Bloggers

Answers to November's Quiz

- 1) How many players in a baseball team? **Nine**
- 2) Bermuda is a colony of which country? **Britain**
- 3) What was the capitol of the USA in 1799?... .. **Philadelphia**
- 4) What is the name for the wearing away of land by water, wind, frost and weather? **Erosion**
- 5) What is cirrocumulus? **Cloud type**
- 6) What are ceramics? **Porcelain & pottery**
- 7) What is the highest mountain in Africa? **Kilimanjaro**
- 8) Where does oxygen in the air come from? **Plants**
- 9) What is a Gila monster? **Lizard**
- 10) Where will you find birdies, eagles and chips? **Golf course**
- 11) Gandhi was given the name Mahatma. What does Mahatma mean? **Great Soul**
- 12) Who flew a kite in a thunder storm to prove lightning was electricity? **Benjamin Franklin**
- 13) What creature can turn its head nearly 360 degrees? **Owl**
- 14) What planet is nearest to our sun? **Mercury**
- 15) What planet is furthest from our sun? **Pluto**

Out and About Revisited





Pictures of some of the walks of yesteryear but in no particular order

Diane and Ken entertain

A woman brought a very limp duck into the veterinary surgeon's. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the duck's chest.

After a moment or two, the vet shook his head sadly and said, "I'm sorry, your duck Cuddles, has passed away."

The distressed woman wailed, "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure. The duck is dead," replied the Vet.

"How can you be so sure?" she protested. "I mean you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something."

The vet rolled his eyes, turned around and left the room.

He returned a few minutes later with a black Labrador retriever.

As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the examination table and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. He then looked up at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head.

The vet patted the dog on the head and took it out of the room.

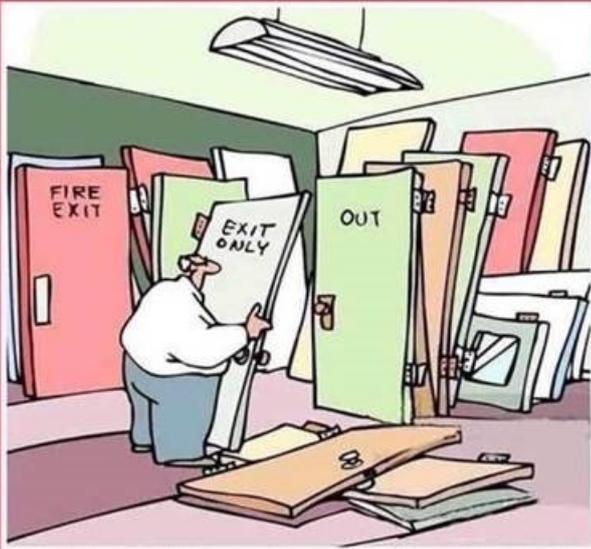
A few minutes later he returned with a cat. The cat jumped on the table and also delicately sniffed the bird from head to foot. The cat sat back on its haunches, shook its head, meowed softly and strolled out of the room.

The vet looked at the woman and said, "I'm sorry, but as I said, this is most definitely, 100% certifiably, a dead duck."

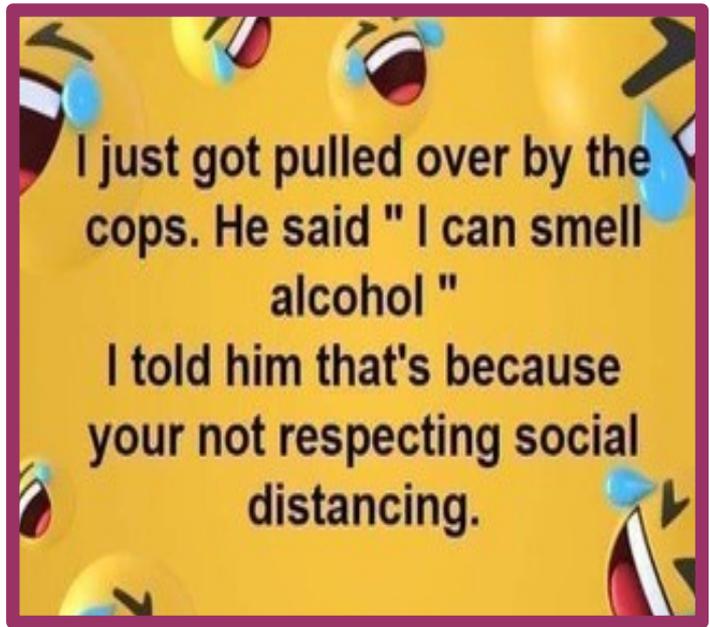
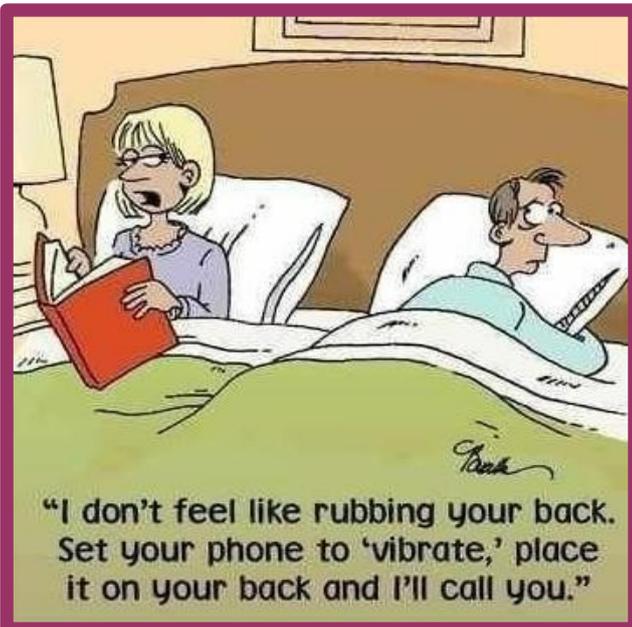
The Vet turned to his computer terminal, hit a few keys and produced a bill, which he handed to the woman.

The duck's owner, still in shock, took the bill. "£150!" she cried, "£150 just to tell me my duck is dead!"

The vet shrugged, "I'm sorry. If you had just taken my word for it, the bill would have been £20 but with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan, it's now £150!"



Bob loved the outdoors. Wound up with quite a collection.



**Bored during
Lockdown? Call a
women's rights
group and ask to
speak to the man
in charge.**

**My wife is great
at multitasking.
She can be mad at
me for four or five
different things
at the same time.**

It snowed last night...

07.30 – I made a snowman.

- 08.10 – A feminist neighbour passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman.
- 08.15 – So I made a snow woman
- 08.17 – My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified snow women everywhere.
- 08.20 – The gay couple living nearby threw a hissy fit and complained that it could have been two men instead.
- 08.22 – The transgender man...woman...person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.
- 08.25 – The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot nose, as veggies are food and are not to decorate snow figures with.
- 08.28 – I was being called racist because the snow couple were white.
- 08.31 – The Middle Eastern gent across the road demanded that the snow woman be covered up.
- 08.40 – The police arrived saying someone had been offended.
- 08.42 – The feminist neighbour complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed as it depicted women in a domestic role.
- 08.43 – The Council Equality Officer arrived and threatened me with eviction.
- 08.45 – The BBC News crew turned up. I was asked if I know the difference between snowmen and snow women. I replied "Snowballs" and I am now called sexist.
- 09.00 – I was featured on the News as a suspected terrorist, racist and homophobic sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather.
- 09.10 – I was asked if I had any accomplices. My children were taken away by social services.
- 09.29 – Far left protesters, offended by everything, marched down the street demanding for me to be arrested.

By noon it had all melted.

[M.B.]

A communion of spirits

My friend Gordon had a lot of fishing tackle. When I say a lot, I mean a room full. There were reels and fly rods, bags and holdalls, nets and bank sticks. There were boxes of beautifully made artificial flies; there were packets of hooks, tins of weights, plastic disgorgers and metal disgorgers. All-in-all, there was the paraphernalia of a man who had a lifetime's love affair with the sport.

As in all things he did, Gordon was always the craftsman. This was reflected in the quality of the tackle he bought and the condition he kept it in. It was therefore a great pleasure and delight for me that following his death I was able to choose some of the tackle that Gordon had used and take it with me on one of my weekly trips to fish the River Avon in Wiltshire.

The tackle I chose from Gordon's collection was for coarse fishing, for I am not a dry fly man, catching roach rather than trout. This was by far his oldest tackle for Gordon had more or less given up coarse fishing, preferring to send a Mayfly across a chalk stream rather than watch a float.

When I say old tackle, I am talking about gear he would have bought in the 'sixties many years ago. Tackle I knew from that era, tackle I recognised as being the best that you could have bought at that time.

I have a theory, that to know a man, you must use his tools. The patina on the haft of my father's hammer was caused by his sweat. My hand now grasps that handle, I perform the same task. My own sweat adds to the shine on the aged wood. A communion of spirits—perhaps? Perhaps it is just a fulfilling sensation to handle good tools and with their help turn an everyday task into a craft.

Certainly, with Gordon's fishing tackle there was a communion of like-minds, if not spirits. Crouched by the side of the River Avon, I can see the roach and chub lying on the gravel runs between the streamer weed. On my rod is Gordon's favourite Mitchell reel. I have put on one of his floats. I cast my line into the current knowing that Gordon did the self-same thing a thousand times before. My fingers turn the handle, adding infinitesimally to the wear his hands caused by many hours of use. I can almost feel his presence.

His float—my float, drifts gently downstream. The river, golden in the sunset continues for another thousand years.

[P.R.]

More from Barbara and Martin

In '73 I said "I do"
I did.
And I still do!

There was one little snowflake with little left to do.
Along came another, and then there were two.
Two little snowflakes laughing along with me,
Along came another, and then there were three.
Three little snowflakes looking around for more,
Along came another, then there were four.
Four little snowflakes dancing and having a jive,
Along came another, and then there were five.
Five little snowflakes having so much fun,
Out came the sun shine, then there were none!

Assembled by T W Itch

...meanwhile back in the olden days

Ready to go to press 1960 or how your Hoover 9 would have been printed sixty or so years ago. A compositor working at the stone finishes the imposition of 32 pages of machine set type pages. Your magazine's imposition is a function carried out by the computer's print command and would have seemed like science fiction to the guy working in this picture.

