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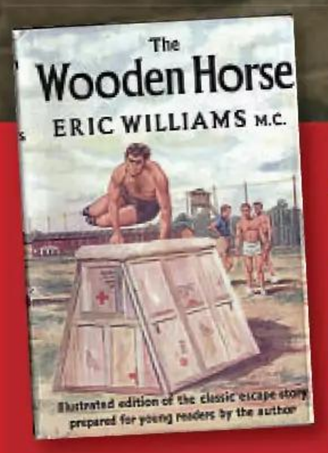

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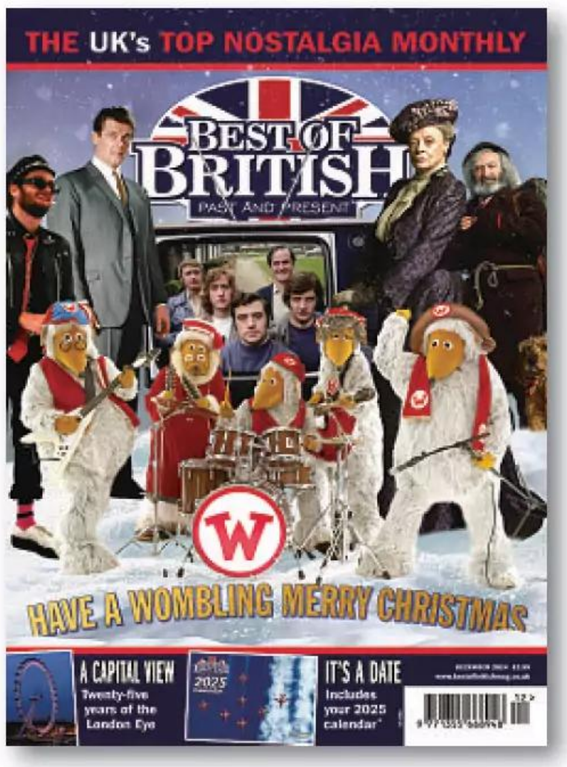

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EDITORIAL

WHAT I GO TO SCHOOL FOR

When a TV series is adapted for the cinema, it often inhabits a slightly different universe to its small screen counterpart. In the On the Buses films, Arthur was able to father a child with Olive, despite his "operation" in the TV series, while Bernard "Privet" Hedges only met and proposed to Penny Wheeler in the Please Sir! film, despite having already married her on TV.

The Please Sir! film also has another familiar element with big screen adaptations, the recasting of a main character. In this case, Carol Hawkins had replaced Penny Spencer as Sharon and would continue to do so for spin-off series The Fenn Street Gang. Other memorable recastings include Robin Askwith replacing Robin Stewart as Mike and Peter Butterworth taking over from Anthony Jackson as Trevor for the Bless This House movie, and Liz Fraser replacing Janet

Davies as Mrs Pike for the 1971 Dad's Army film.

Sometimes this recasting is for creative reasons, others simply because the original actor either wants to move on, is unavailable or is sadly no longer with us.

In most cases, the replacement of an actor is done with little fanfare. However, in science fiction and fantasy, the recasting of a character is often a major plot point. Doctor Who does it all the time and, in the 1980s, the producers of Robin of Sherwood were able to tie up differing accounts of the Robin Hood legend by replacing Michael Praed's Robin of Loxley with Jason Connery's Robert, Earl of Huntingdon.

Despite some initial scepticism, we often find it easy to accept these changes and, in the case of Please Sir! and Bless This House, the films are shown more often than the TV series, making the replacements more familiar to us than the original actors.

Simon Stabler

AN HONOUR… AND A PRIVILEGE?

Cardinal Cox recalls his attempt to be ennobled

Earlier in the year I was going through one of the piles of paperwork around my home (itself an action worthy of a column) when I came across the file from the time I was trying to get a seat in the House of Lords.

Back in 2000, the government of the time, feeling flushed with not having presided over a millennial meltdown, opened up the system of appointing peers by allowing folks to nominate non-party political members. They had to get a short-list of 15, I was one of the 3,164 nominees.

Now, don't get me wrong, there's lots wrong with the honours system, but that was no reason not to try and get one. Historically, to have a title your ancestor either came over with William the Conqueror (or accepted his victory) or

was an illegitimate son of Charles II and a passing orange-seller (he wasn't called the merry monarch for nothing).

Obviously, there were exceptions. In Suffolk, Roland the Farter earned himself a middling estate, smaller than what a knight might expect but larger than the average farmer, but in return he had to perform "a jump, a whistle and a fart" every Christmas for Henry II. This was, of course, before the Morecambe and Wise specials.

And while there's still a whiff of corruption about the ennoblement of folks who give healthy donations to political parties, this is nothing compared to the 1922 cash for honours scandal (managed by the blackguard Maundy Gregory) that quoted £10,000 for a knighthood and £40,000 for a baronetcy. This was one of the factors in the fall of Lloyd George.

You'll not be surprised if I tell you my own attempt at a seat in the Lords got no further than the filling in of the form. I was swiftly weeded out. Which is a shame as, if I remember right, later stages were to have been a cross between the Krypton Factor and Miss World, and I like to think I'd have done OK in the swimsuit round.

Next Issue: Spangles

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PAST AND PRESENT

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Cover: David Barry, pictured in 1969, as Please Sir!'s Frankie Abbott.

Photograph: ITV/Shutterstock
Coloured, expanded and restored by Stuart Humphryes

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Postbag

The Editor welcomes letters for this section. Pictures are appreciated. Letters may be edited so that we can include as many as possible

A Family Affair

Dear Simon,

Let me tell you about some of my relatives. They're all long gone, so they won't mind.

My mother was a secretary/shorthand typist. She was very keen to be properly dressed on all occasions, and even changed into a smart dress to hang out the washing. I don't know who she thought might see her in her back garden.

My father worked in British Railway's telegraph offices. They sent messages by morse code about whether trains were on time or running late. Now done by computer, of course. He cycled everywhere until he was over 80 when he had to stop on doctor's orders. What happened is that one day when his doctor was in her car and doing her rounds, she passed my father on his bicycle. When she got back, she phoned him up and told him that he was so wobbly and erratic that he was a danger to both himself and other road users and shouldn't be on the roads. So, he gave up cycling, shame that.

One of my aunts was fond of dogs. She lived part way up a steep hill. Outside her house was an old ice-cream carton with some water in it for thirsty dogs on their way up the hill. She dismissed my suggestion that she should do teas for their owners who might also be tired.

Her husband was an orthopaedic mechanic who made metal support frames for the legs of children who had been crippled by polio. He was very handy at all manual tasks and a whiz at fixing anything broken, except lawn mowers. On one occasion, after he'd repaired one, it ran backwards when it was switched it on.

My late wife's aunt came on holiday with us to Beer in Devon and was struggling on a walk from Beer to Branscombe. My wife offered to carry her bag. It was heavy and, looking inside, she found a spare pair of shoes. Questioned about why these were needed for a short walk, her aunt said she always carried a spare pair everywhere she went in case of an emergency. My wife's response is unprintable.

Her husband was a reader at the Daily Express. I expect his job no longer exists as computers can check everything (No, they can't – Editor). The Daily Express used to feature Rupert Bear cartoons which were made into an annual at the end of each year. He always gave his nieces one of these annuals as a Christmas present.

Family members with a story that is part of our memories about them.

Don Alcott
Shirley, Solihull

A Special Treat

Dear Simon,

As ever, the June issue had loads of interesting and memory jogging articles, and the ice-cream wafer maker (Puzzles: What is it?) took me back.

You would place a wafer biscuit in the tray, fill the tray with ice-cream, level off using a spatula, place another wafer biscuit on top. Push the lower part of the handle upwards to eject ice cream wafer from the tray.

My sister and I would hurtle into the house shouting: "Ice-cream man, ice-cream man" and then, clutching a tanner, go back out once more for a cornet or a wafer. If our mum was feeling generous, we might get a choc ice instead.

Totally taken for granted today, but many years ago, often a special treat.

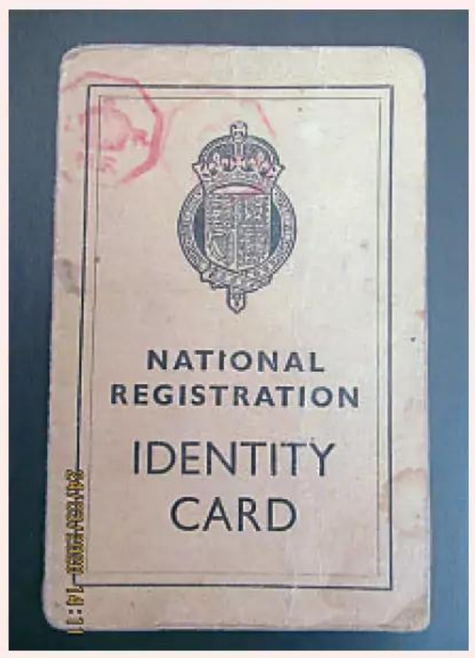
Kind regards,

Alan Mudge
King's Lynn, Norfolk

In the Pink

Dear Simon,

May's Treasures in the Attic showed a standard issue identity card of World War Two. They were first issued around 1938 in preparation for the coming war. Initially, they were the dull green colour but babies' cards were pink.



After a short while, however, they had to be handed back in exchange for the same colour as adults. For some reason, my wife's parents failed to do this, so she kept hers. A photo of this is attached.

Bizarrely, although there was space for a photo of the holder to be affixed there was no requirement to do so. Only firemen and police had photos.

I would like to know whether any readers also have a pink ID card.

Regards,
Pat Lelliott

A Very Special Day

Dear Simon,

What a special day the Early May bank holiday was this year as the country marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

I had to wonder just where those 80 years had gone, then watched and marvelled at the reruns of the old newsreels, just hoping that I would get a glimpse of my family for we were there in that joyful crowd at Buckingham Palace on 8 May 1945.

I was a 14-year-old lad at that time, living with my parents and younger sister, Jean, at our new home at Roehampton in south-west London. We had been rehomed there after losing our apartment at Vauxhall when a German landmine exploded nearby and brought the house down. Luckily, we were in the station shelter and were unharmed.

My plan for VE Day was to join a few of my friends and go up to the close by Wimbledon Common for a kickabout but my father told me: "No way, you are coming with us to London," and that was that. My Mother had been at Trafalgar Square for the Armistice celebrations in 1918 and had enjoyed a ride perched on the front of an old bus around and around the square, so she was hoping similar celebrations would be available.

Off we trooped to Putney railway station, where the crowds waiting for trains to Waterloo were already enormous. We did get a train eventually and made it to Vauxhall, got up, gave our old, wrecked home a wave and began our walk along the Thames to Parliament, then on to Green Park, down the Mall and then found a space sitting on the Queen Victoria Memorial – all this in teeming crowds of singing and dancing people. There we enjoyed mother's tea and sandwiches as a bit of a picnic.

It is difficult to explain the true feeling of joy that day. Our family, like so many, had relatives and friends killed in the war and now it was all over. It was truly a magical few hours. We cheered the king and queen on the palace balcony, then a great roar went up for the sight of Winston Churchill.

How thrilling and inspiring it was for the anniversary event to have actor Timothy Spall standing by Sir Winston's statue, quoting one of his stirring speeches from the original celebrations.

At that first celebration in 1945, we stayed outside the palace for three or four hours before wearily dancing and jogging our way back to Vauxhall station. Then it was a train home and Mother somehow set out a good meal to end our day.

The TV scenes for the recent celebrations truly showed the joy of everyone and I was quite enthralled knowing I had been in the middle of it all 80 years ago. Watching the flypast which included the UK's last flying Lancaster bomber with its four Merlins going full out as it approached the palace reminded me of the time, about 10 years ago, when the wildlife artist David Shepherd and I were invited to RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire for a special charity weekend.

David's aircrew friends had allowed us to get on board the Lancaster, climb around and sit in every seat. How funny it was to see lanky David trying to get over the large spar in the aircraft to get to the pilot's seat. It was even more amusing to see him climbing into the tiny rear-gunner seat, but he did make it and climbed out, marvelling at what those airmen of Bomber Command had endured in their air battles.

So, there it was, a fitting finale for me on television watching that same old Lancaster proudly flying over the palace and leading the RAF tribute for this very special day.

Ron McGill
Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey

Candid Camera

Dear Simon,

I used to have a great aunt and uncle living in Lowestoft. They often used to walk to a well-known nearby park called the Sparrows Nest.

You can imagine their surprise when they noticed a postcard of the park for sale in Lowestoft depicting them in the foreground. They had no idea that the photograph had ever been taken.

Needless to say, they bought several and proudly gave them to the family.

I still have mine and it is a nice memento of Aunt Maud and Uncle Alf some 40 years or so after they passed away.

Kind regards

Colin Sweeting
Barkingside, Ilford, Essex

A Knockout Visit

Dear Simon,

I enjoyed the letter by David Sim regarding some of the past sporting events he had attended (Postbag: I Was There, June).

He mentioned Brian London who I had the pleasure of meeting once. I have always been a boxing fan, and back in 2002 I knew that the former British Heavyweight Champion resided somewhere in Blackpool. I had several boxing items that I had collected over the years that related to the ex-champion, and I was keen to get the opportunity to get Brian to autograph them for me.

I managed to get his address and wrote to him asking if he would permit me to visit him on some future occasion. A few days later, I received a reply from him giving me an appointment that would be convenient, and I duly drove over to see him.

The meeting proved to be an unqualified success and Brian was a welcoming and generous host and more than happy to discuss his career. We chatted for a couple of hours and the time just flew by. One of the things I found fascinating was his admission that despite his achievements and pedigree in the sport (his father, Jack, had also been a British Champion) he didn't really like boxing and only embarked on his career for the money it provided.

Well, it had all certainly paid dividends. Brian lived in a very nice house near a park and had run a successful nightclub in Blackpool for a number of years, although a non-drinker himself.

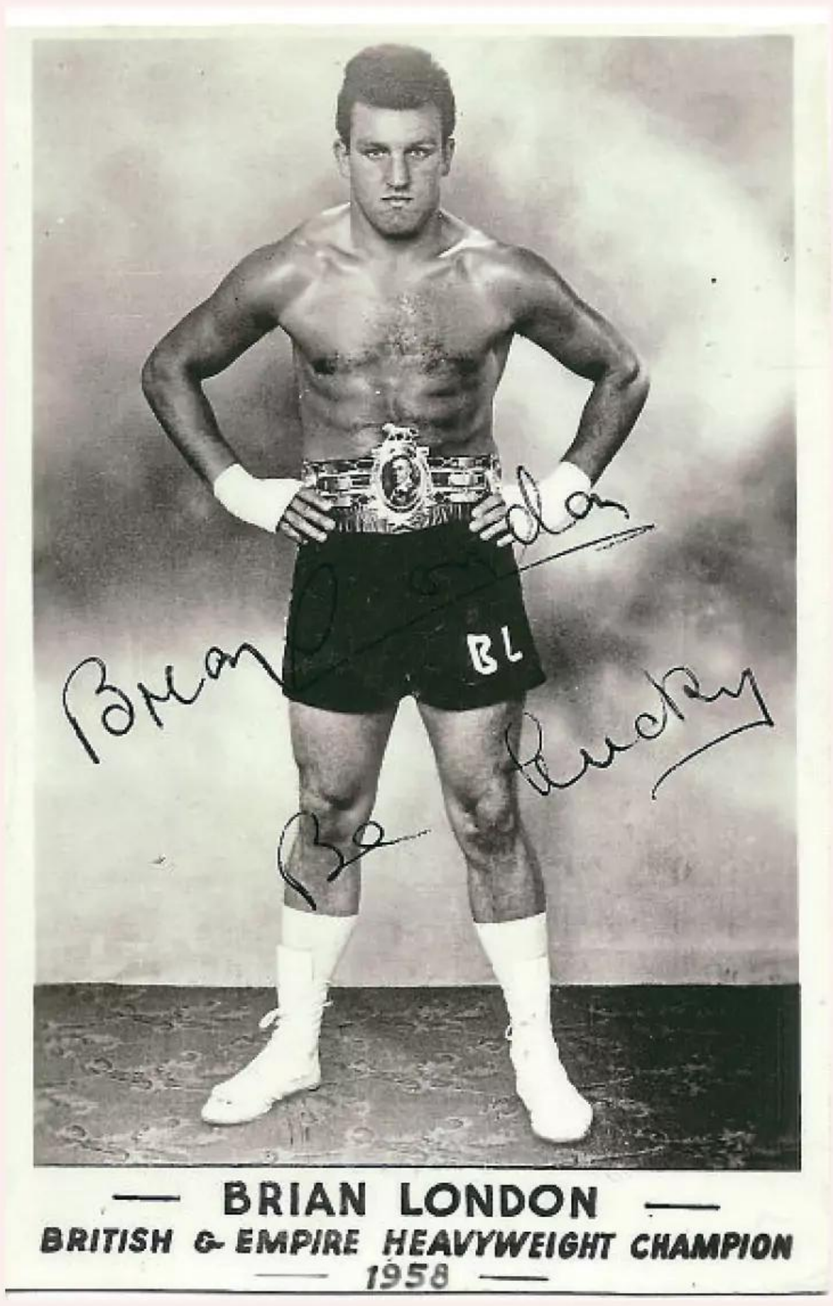
When I remarked how fit and well he looked, he showed me a punch bag he had hanging in his garage and on which he always had a daily workout. I had a couple of his old fight programmes and photos of him that he autographed for me, each of them with his added catchphrase, "Be lucky".

I had my camera with me, so asked if we could have a photo taken together as a memento. Brian's wife duly obliged as the photographer. However, when I had the film developed, I discovered she had managed to cut both our heads off when taking the picture.

It had all been thoroughly enjoyable though, and not even a photographic decapitation could spoil it. Sadly, Brian is no longer with us, having passed away in 2021, but the day provided me with some very fond memories.

I attach a picture of one of the photos that he signed for me.

Larry Braysher
Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria



'I told you to stop'

Dear Simon,

Ah, the English driving licence (On the Road, March), I remember it well – too well.

Arriving in Windsor, England, in mid-1975 after 18 months on the continent using my New Zealand international driving licence, I felt I should obtain an English one. I read up on the road code, finding it was similar to NZ's. With over a decade of experience in various countries, I thought gaining a licence would be a doddle. Owning a left-hand-drive car did not go down well with the evaluator.

Attempt 1: *"You weren't looking in your rear-view mirror!" "Yes, I was! I don't need to move my head as only my eyes are required." "I must see you move your head. Failed!"*

Attempt 2: *"When I slap the dashboard with my file, I want you to stop." BANG! I came to a gentle halt in the middle of the road. "Too slow. I told you to stop." "I did." "Not fast enough." "I wasn't overly keen to leave tyre marks on the road." "Failed!"*

Attempt 3: I moved my head like a backseat nodding dog. BANG! I slammed on the brakes. I braced. He didn't – almost pasting himself to the windscreen. *"Failed!" "Um. Why? You told me last time that I was too slow. Now I'm too fast?" "FAILED!"*

I gave up.

Several months later, I needed to drive into Windsor from work to pick up my wife. I was running late, sitting on a towel, wearing a wetsuit (another story). Approaching the Water Fountain roundabout, I misjudged the speed of a car on my right. I dinged it on the left rear wheel housing. A minor issue. One in which I did not want a police presence. Climbing out the left-hand door threw the young female driver. I still see her face as I walked around the front of my car. Long straggly hair, beard, dark glasses, wetsuit with loose tail hanging between my legs, dripping water. She stopped. Wanting to be somewhere else. Anywhere else. Just not here. I apologised, said it was my fault, gave my details. She was back in her car and gone quicker than the Flash. I never heard from her again. Funny the way things stick in one's mind.

Wayne Reid
Kurow, New Zealand

Keeper's Goals

Dear Simon,

Sometimes, when you are having an overdue clear-out of past correspondence, a letter you have long since forgotten about turns up.

This happened to me recently when I came across a letter that had a Leicester City Football Club stamp on the envelope. Intrigued, I found it was a letter from them to me from their chief scout Ray Shaw, who held that position for 12 years until his death in April 1980.

The letter was dated 12 March 1980 and I had written to the club after reading they were looking for a goalkeeper. The keeper I had recommended had been with Bournemouth who I followed then – but what did I know?

I hope this can be included in a future edition of Best of British as part, at least, of the letter I received was informative and interesting – and it was funny (The goalkeeper I recommended was considered by Ray to be "too small"). I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have sent letters to Simon to publish in Best of British. As far as I'm concerned, you are all stars so keep it up. I'm just one of many who enjoy them enormously.

Kindest regards

Colin Macleod
Beauly, Inverness

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12th March 1980

RS/Jr

Mr.C.Macleod
4 Mayfly Close
Fordingbridge
HANTS

Dear Mr Macleod,

Thank you for your letter to Mr Wallace which has been handed to me to deal with.

Most managers in the top two divisions are looking for Keepers who are 6ft to start with, this they say, lets them get some Sleep on Friday Nights' instead of waking up in fear of the big cross to the far post. Joking, apart the first thing that we look for is that he must be good on crosses, if not, we look elsewhere, it is easey to make a "Shot Stopper" out of any Keeper, but cutting out the big bender to the far post is another story.

Many thanks again for your time and trouble, and interest.

Yours sincerely,

R Shaw

Ray Shaw
Chief Scout

Can you help?

Is there anyone out there who took part in the Essex Senior Scout 4th European Expedition to Germany in the summer of 1959? If so, I would love to hear from you; I have a number of photos but no other paper records of our first ever visit abroad.
David Sansom, Email: davidwsansom@yahoo.co.uk

Looking for information on the newspaper photographer EWS "Bill" Byers who worked with the likes of the Ilford Recorder from his office at 16 The Broadway, Ilford Lane. I would be grateful to see any examples of his pictures including football matches and Norman Wisdom's 1953 appearance at Barkingside High Street.
Rob Meyers, 123 Ashurst Drive, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1HA

Ballroom and popular sequence dancing gentleman would like to meet lady, 64+ for local events (Ilminster/ Taunton area). I have a nice dance floor and a jukebox with 60s/70s records for practice and improvement.
Julian Bittleston, Tel: 01460 281993

The Friends of Dover Castle are keen to find any information relating to anybody who was stationed at, or worked at, Dover Castle either service or civilian roles. The castle still had troops quartered in barracks there until 1958 and from the 1960s to the 80s, the castle tunnels were used as a cold war regional seat of government.

These tunnels had previously played an important role during World War Two. We are also interested in any information relating to Dover Home Guard for an ongoing project.
The Friends of Dover Castle, 1 Keep Yard, Dover Castle, Castle Hill, Dover, Kent CT16 1HU Email: fodc2025@outlook.com

I am looking for relatives of men/women who would have served on the World War Two gun and searchlight battery, Inner Froward Point, near Brixham, Devon. Any information gladly received.
Chris Martindill, Flat 4, Harden House, Trelissick Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3GJ Tel: 01803 525483.

I am trying to find a Jeff Green, my first husband's brother, from Woking in Surrey. My first husband (Les) and his other siblings are all deceased as far as I know, but it would be nice to catch up with Jeff if he is still around, presumably no longer in Woking. He was married to Jenny, with at least two children, but I know they were divorced (in the 1970/80s) and he remarried some years later. Would be in his early 70s, I think. I was then Doreen Green.
Dee Gordon, 34 Waters Edge, Shorefield Road, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7RH Email: deegordon@btinternet.com

Requests for information, friends and family searches and reunion announcements can be included here free of charge. Send any requests, written as concisely as possible, to Can You Help?, Best of British, Kelsey Media Ltd, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Linconshire LN9 6JR or by email to info@bestofbritishmag.co.uk

On the Night Shift

Dear Simon,

The name Shelley Fabares leapt out of the page while I was reading the article about Lorraine Silver (The Sound of Silver, June). I had no idea Shelley Fabares had been a singer. I remember her co-starring alongside Craig T Nelson in the US sitcom Coach (1989-97). This was during the time "proper programmes" featured on the ITV overnight schedule. A mix of home-produced programmes seemingly made specifically for overnight slots, music shows, sports programmes, and North American drama series (Coach was the only sitcom I can remember).

Football League Extra was appointment viewing at 12.30am on Tuesdays (it was always a race against time to get home from work on Monday nights in time to watch it). Night Shift, which earned a cult following, was seemingly randomly slotted into the schedule to fill a five-minute gap. The most memorable thing about the programme, which visited businesses operating late at night, was not the presenter Colin Bennett (Mr Bennett from Take Hart) but his Edmonton Oilers jacket which he apparently only removed once during the entire run. Episodes of Night Shift are available on YouTube including a visit to a fish and chip shop to see how the meal is cooked and ending with Colin and his camera crew tucking in.

I guess as budgets were cut back, there was less money to put towards furnishing the schedules for night owls and gradually the programming became more and more diluted until first gaming and now shopping have taken over. Neither are a patch on Colin Bennett and his Edmonton Oilers jacket.

Jon Harris

The Lad Himself

Dear Simon,

Back in the late 1970s, I worked with a colleague who had to go into hospital for an operation.

I went to see him while he was at home convalescing and lent him my copy of Tony Hancock's The Blood Donor LP. He enjoyed it very much but, unfortunately, I never did get my record back.

Imagine my surprise and delight when my daughter, who was at a jumble sale, phoned me to say she had found a copy of the same and would I like it for all of £2.

I'm sure you can guess my answer and the LP has pride of place in my record collection. It is in good condition, and it is lovely to hear the voices of those actors who are sadly no longer with us.

Keep up the good work on your very excellent magazine.

Yours sincerely

Graham Belsham
Maldon, Essex

X Marks the Spot

Dear Simon,

June's Postbag contains a couple of references to churches in Albury, just outside Guildford.

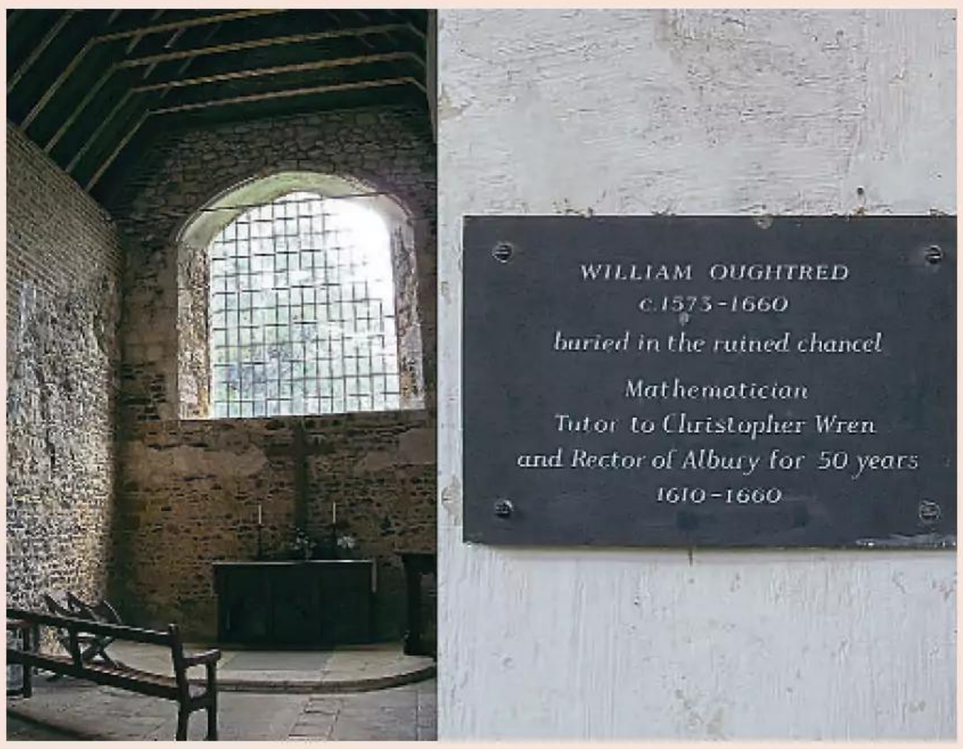
At the risk of mentioning something slightly sideways, may I introduce you to Old St Peter and St Paul churchyard in Albury. And in particular to the former rector there: William Oughtred (c1575-1660).

In addition to being rector, William was a famous mathematician in his own right. After logarithms and logarithmic scales had been invented, he was the first to use two such sliding scales to perform direct multiplication and division – and thereby "inventing" the slide rule (around 1622).

But possibly most well-known among his numerous mathematical inventions was the introduction of the symbol "X" for multiplication.

William is buried in the ruined chancel of the church.

Best Regards
Barry Stone



Memories of Chorleywood

Dear Simon,

When my family first moved to Chorleywood in 1971, we would often see pupils from the Chorleywood College for Girls With Little Or No Sight in the village or at church on a Sunday morning.

Opened in 1921, the college was the first of its kind at a time when there were few facilities for educating children who were visually impaired. It was founded by the National Institute for the Blind (now the RNIB) and located in the Cedars, a large Renaissance mansion, now the site of a retirement village. Pupils from the age of five were admitted and the girls encouraged to lead a full and active life. Independence despite blindness was practised throughout the daily routine and, to increase efficiency in reading braille, various methods were explored.

In addition to their studies, pupils also took part in outdoor games including "Quickit", played with a wicker ball and wickets from which the ball would rebound – no batsmen required. By 1927, the first pupils were sitting exams with many entering university or going into occupations such as physiotherapy and engineering.

Voluntary work was also undertaken for the benefit of the elderly ladies living in nearby almshouses on the edge of Chorleywood Common. Girls used to collect firewood from the shrubbery to deliver to these residents. In later years, while at work, they would sing their own Wood Gatherers' Song to the tune of D'ye ken John Peel, the first verse of which reads:

Do you know Chorleywood with its cedar trees
Monkey puzzle, oak, elm and many more like these
Yes, I know Chorleywood when I'm scrambling on my knees
Getting Social Service bundles in the morning

The college remained open until 1986, when it moved to and merged with Worcester College for the Blind, a boys' school, to form a co-educational establishment.

Now one often hears the saying: "It's the best thing since sliced bread", but I wonder how many readers know that it was at Chorleywood where this product was first developed in 1961 by the Baking Research Association set up by the government after World War Two.

The Chorleywood Bread Process transformed the industry by producing a loaf that was faster and more affordable for the mass market. The association moved to Gloucestershire in 1995 and its former premises at Beaumont House later became a residential care home for the elderly.

Best wishes

Chris Kennett
Chorleywood, Hertfordshire

Chorleywood College.

The Collector

Growing up in the 90s, I spent many a lunch break at primary school huddled around small stacks of Pogs, cardboard discs which were bought, swapped, and collected, with many of us building large collections.

One Christmas, I received a Pog milk cap maker; it was only when I started looking into the name that I discovered that the game had in fact started using the cardboard milk caps in Hawaii. Through research, I also found out that the UK had adopted the use of the milk caps to seal wide top glass milk bottles around the late 1890s, and so the seed was sown and the hunt for these caps was on.

Originally made from wood fibre, later wood pulp, one of the main advantages of the card caps over other types of milk bottle closures was their advertising potential – the dairy names and milk type were easily printed on the discs. While larger companies used them to promote their products to millions of homemakers across the country.

Milk caps were excellent for publicity during World War Two and advertised everything from saving wastepaper to support the war effort, saving schemes and wings for victory.

The use of card inserts finally ended in September 1954, when the law changed from 1 October requiring the tops of milk bottles to be covered by overlapping foil. Many of the larger dairies had already switched to foil caps which encapsulated the whole bottle top – much to the delight of birds who became partial to pecks of fresh cream in the mornings.

There are still a number of milk cap collectors around (of which I am unashamedly one). No matter where I go, I can always be found skulking around antiques shops and rummaging at the bottom of boxes trying to find more caps to add to my collection.

If you have any that you think may be of interest, please don't hesitate to contact me at steven_hern@live.co.uk

Ste Hern (instagram.com/milkcapcrazy)

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FREESAT 306 | VIRGIN 445

The Monkey's Paw (1948)
(Tuesday 1 July, 9.10am)
Horror. Director: Norman Lee. Starring: Milton Rosmer, Michael Martin-Harvey, Joan Seton and Megs Jenkins. A dealer sells a monkey's paw that can grant the three wishes but warns that disaster will follow.

The Man in Black (1950)
(Thursday 3 July, 1.25pm)
Thriller. Director: Francis Searle. Starring: Betty Ann Davies, Sheila Burrell, Valentine Dyall and Sid James. After a man's untimely death, his second wife tries to drive his daughter insane to inherit his estate.

The Trollenberg Terror (1958)
(Saturday 5 July, 3pm)
Sci-fi. Director: Quentin Lawrence. Starring: Forrest Tucker, Laurence Payne, Janet Munro, Jennifer Jayne, Warren Mitchell and Andrew Faulds. A series of deaths on a Swiss mountainside appear to be connected to a mysterious cloud.

The Blue Parrot (1954)
(Sunday 6 July, 9.10am)
Crime Drama. Director: John Harlow. Starring: Dermot Walsh, Jacqueline Hill, Ferdy Mayne, Ballard Berkeley, Richard Pearson and John Le Mesurier. A Soho nightclub is the focus for an undercover investigation after the murder of a small-time crook.

On the Fiddle (1961)
(Monday 7 July, 9.50am)
Comedy. Director: Cyril Frankel. Starring: Alfred Lynch, Sean Connery and Cecil Parker. A couple of loveable service dodgers avoid the front line until they are sent to France.

The Best of Benny Hill (1974)
(Sunday 13 July, 9.55pm)
Comedy. Director: John Robins. Starring: Benny Hill and Patricia Hayes. A brilliant collection of sketches and musical numbers taken from Benny Hill's popular television show.

iPLAYER
bbc.co.uk/iplayer

The Great Railway Cavalcade: Rocket 150 at Rainhill
First transmitted in 1980, Brian Redhead reports from the Rocket 150 event held at Rainhill, Lancashire to mark the 150th anniversary of the world's first inter-city railway and the Stephensons' legendary Rocket locomotive. On display are "celebrity" engines from across the country, including Flying Scotsman, Sir Nigel Gresley and the Advanced Passenger Train.

Arena
Andrea Dunbar and Victoria Wood In a programme first broadcast in 1980, Arena looks at writer and performer Victoria Wood and explores her talent to amuse through her witty and engaging songs. The film also profiles teenage playwright Andrea Dunbar, whose first play, The Arbor, written when she was only 15, was running at the Royal Court.

Late Night Line-Up
Coco the Clown First transmitted in 1966, Joan Bakewell interviews renowned circus performer Nicolai Poliakov who made his name as Coco the Clown. Coco discusses his life and career and reveals some of the unwritten rules of clowning.

Aren *Andrea Dunbar and Victoria Wood*

itvX

The Real Nolly
Helena Bonham-Carter narrates this explorative doc about Noele Gordon. Witness the rise and fall of a soapland queen with access to personal papers and never-before-seen pictures.

Houdini and Doyle
Harry Houdini (Michael Weston) and Arthur Conan Doyle (Stephen Mangan) grudgingly join forces with Scotland Yard to investigate unsolved and inexplicable crimes with a supernatural slant.

Bless This House
Sid is a family man but he doesn't find it easy. He copes with his two teenage children growing up in a world whose values and attitudes he doesn't really understand.

Photographs: (Victoria Wood) BBC, (Warbird Workshop) UKTV/Wallace/AmbientLife

LEGEND

**FREEVIEW 41, SKY 148,
FREESAT 137, VIRGIN 149**

The Fall Guy
(Weeknights from Thursday 10 July, 7pm)
Colt Seavers (Lee Majors) is a Hollywood stuntman by trade but also moonlights as a bounty hunter – and there's never any shortage of bail-jumping bad guys to hunt down. Spectacular stunt work and an unforgettable theme song (sung by Majors), distinguishes this as a classic action-adventure series, which ran from 1981 for five seasons.

Jules Verne's Rocket to the Moon (1967)
(Saturday 12 July, 5.40pm)
Sci-fi comedy. Legendary American showman Phineas T Barnum designs a space rocket to take him to the moon, but his scheme is threatened when two crooks decide to sabotage the craft.

Dr Terror's House of Horrors (1965)
(Saturday 19 July, 5.55pm)
Classic horror film starring Peter Cushing as a tarot-reading grim reaper who predicts a grisly fate for an all-star cast including Christopher Lee and Roy Castle.

Island of Terror (1966)
(Saturday 26 July, 6.15pm)
Tentacled terror starring horror icon Peter Cushing. Following a spate of grisly deaths, a scientist travels to a remote island where he discovers deadly tentacled monsters are taking over.

Island of Terror

U&GOLD

**SKY 110, VIRGIN 124,
TALKTALK 310, NOW TV**

Dad's Army
(Thursday 3 July, 7.20pm)
Don't Fence Me In Mainwaring's men are sent to guard the local PoW camp full of Italian soldiers. Walker can't resist pulling one of his scams and has them assembling radio parts.

The Royle Family
(Friday 11 July, 10pm)
Decorating Will that wallpaper ever get stripped? Jim enlists Twiggy and Dave to help with the decorating.

U&DRAMA

**FREEVIEW/YOUVIEW/BT/
TALKTALK 20, SKY 143,
VIRGIN 130, FREESAT 158**

Tenko
(Thursday 10 July, 2pm)
Stephanie Beacham stars in the very first episode in the classic series about the ordeals of British women in a Japanese PoW camp. In Singapore, 1941, lives are about to be changed.

Lovejoy
(Friday 11 July, 4pm)
The Galloping Major A cannon bursts through into the cellar of Tinker's favourite pub and Lovejoy seeks out expert opinion on its worth.

U&YESTERDAY

**TALKTALK 27, SKY 155,
VIRGIN 129, FREESAT 159**

Bangers & Cash
(Wednesday 2 July, 9pm)
Dave collects a Ford Fiesta XR2i that's not moved from a garage for 21 years and Derek picks up a 1956 Siva Tourer, made famous in Doctor Who.

Warbird Workshop
(Friday 11 July, 8pm)
Waterbird The epic battle to rebuild The Waterbird, the Royal Navy's first seaplane. Filmed over 12 years, the labour-intensive project tests veteran engineer Gerry Cooper.

Warbird Workshop

Watch Dave, U&W, U&Yesterday and U&Drama shows on demand with U (u.co.uk) and catch up on your favourite programmes.

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BRITAIN NOW

TOPICAL SNIPPETS FROM AROUND OUR NATION

Welcome Back, M'Lady

The daughter of Thunderbirds creators Gerry and Sylvia Anderson is marking the 60th anniversary of the classic series by reviving the spin-off Lady Penelope Investigates. Originally a prose feature that appeared in the pages of TV Century 21 and Lady Penelope magazines, Lady Penelope Investigates is returning in a series of books and full-cast audio adventures. Executive producer Dee Anderson will step into her late mother's shoes to voice Lady Penelope in the audio plays, which are to be released later this year by Anderson Andrews Productions (anderson-andrews.com).

Dee is currently performing her one-woman show, Growing Up With Thunderbirds, a heartfelt tribute to the boundless imagination and thrilling adventures that defined a generation. Having made its debut in May at London's Phoenix Arts Club, the tour continues at St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth on 25 July, Forest Arts Centre, New Milton on 30 August, The Cinema Museum, London on 30 November and a date TBC at West End Centre, Aldershot.

Dee Anderson, daughter of Thunderbirds creators Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, is currently sharing her story as part of a national tour.

It's Bigger and It's Inside

A museum's resident knitting group has created a 50ft-long scarf to celebrate the opening of an unofficial Doctor Who exhibition. The coincidentally named Scarf (Sociable Coffee and Reliable Friends), which meets once a week in Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery's (01733 864663, peterboroughmuseum.org.uk) Squires Café for a catch-up, coffee and creation, planned for the scarf to be long enough to wrap around the museum's stunning staircase. The 14-strong group raise money for The Children's Society by selling beautiful hand-made items at two official sales events a year, along with coffee mornings and other fund-raising activities.

Taking around six weeks to knit the scarf, which is approximately three times the length of the one Tom Baker wore during his time as the Doctor, the group has loaned it to the museum for the duration of Adventures in Time & Space, one of the most extensive displays of Doctor Who artefacts for many years. When the exhibition ends on 2 November, the group will be turning the scarf into shorter versions and, along with the museum, will donate them to a local homeless charity.

Members of the Scarf knitting group with the 50ft-long scarf created to complement Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery's unofficial Doctor Who exhibition, Adventures in Time & Space.

Platform 2b, Or Not 2b

The railway between Birmingham and the birthplace of William Shakespeare has been transformed into a unique tribute to the playwright. Thirty-four statues of the Bard of Avon have been installed along the route between Birmingham Moor Street and Stratford-upon-Avon, with each of the 18 stations adopting a different Shakespeare play. The artwork was unveiled at Stratford-upon-Avon and was celebrated with an extract from As You Like It, performed by students from King Edward VI School, the school that Shakespeare himself attended. The statues, which are complemented by planters with flowers looked after by volunteers along the line, were made possible thanks to the Friends of the Shakespeare Line (FoSL), Network Rail, West Midlands Railway, and Chiltern Railways which worked together to fund and install them. Stations and plays connected along the route include Yardley Wood and Twelfth Night, Wood End and The Merchant of Venice, Henley-in-Arden and Romeo and Juliet, and Wilmcote and The Taming of the Shrew.

Volunteers, railway staff and students from King Edward VI School unveil one of the tributes to William Shakespeare along the Shakespeare Line between Birmingham Moor Street and Stratford-upon-Avon stations.

Photographs: (Platform 2b) Network Rail, (Saving Stories) RNLI, (Rudolph Walker) BBC/Jack Barnes, (Liberty) Creative Commons/DiscoA340

Saving Stories

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) has marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day by remembering its heroic crew and the part they played in World War Two. The RNLI (0300 300 9990, rnli.org) played a vital role in the war effort, with lifeboats launching 3,760 times and saving a total of 6,376 lives.

RNLI lifeboat crews not only went to the aid of ships that had been wrecked, but also towed vessels loaded with explosives and top-secret information. They navigated minefields, rescued downed aircrew, ferried food to remote villages, brought doctors to the injured and took priests to the dying.

The last lifeboat launch of the war happened one minute before World War Two ended, with Salcombe lifeboat launching to a Norwegian minesweeper which had encountered an explosion off the coast of Devon. Torbay and Salcombe lifeboats conducted a search of the area but, sadly, only two cushions were found.

During the war, 12 lifeboat crew lost their lives trying to save others and a total of seven lifeboats were lost in various ways – from air raids on lifeboat stations, to being captured.

Many crew were recognised for their bravery, and a total of 204 RNLI gallantry medals were awarded to lifeboat crew for their wartime efforts.

The RNLI was recently awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to research and share stories of courage from World War Two. The RNLI is looking for more stories of courage like the one from John May from Fraserburgh.

His grandfather John Downie May, who joined the RNLI in 1939, helped with countless life-saving missions during his time at Fraserburgh Lifeboat Station, including the rescue of Danish motor vessel Baradrangar, and the trawler Northward with a crew of 10 in 1940.

John May followed in his father's footsteps as a fisherman and, inspired by his grandfather, joined the RNLI in Fraserburgh himself.

"I was in awe of my grandfather when I was little," recalls John May. "I remember looking at his medals and how proud the family was of his bravery. It's important to remember the stories and bravery of people like my grandfather and the lives he helped to save on the 80th anniversary of VE Day."

John May pictured with his grandfather's bronze medal and certificate, awarded following the rescue of Danish motor vessel Baradrangar in World War Two.

Email heritage@rnli.org.uk if you have a story you would like to share with RNLI 1939-45: Stories of Courage.

BEST OF BRITISH
PAST AND PRESENT

NEXT MONTH

In the August Issue of Best of British

No Albert Square

We speak to EastEnders' Rudolph Walker

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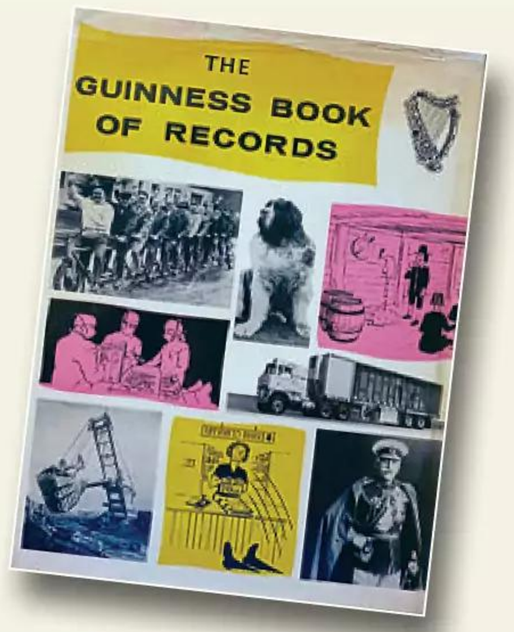
Seventy years of Guinness World Records



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Round the AUCTION HOUSES

Every week at auction houses up and down the country, a varied host of collectables are put up for sale at general and specialist events, offering everything from top-end treasures to more modest items. **David Brown** picks a selection of recent gems that have found new homes, and looks ahead to forthcoming sales.

LOT 2161 Numismatica Ars Classica and David Guest Numismatics – The Traveller Collection, Zürich, 20 May (arsclassicacoins.com)

The first auction of the Traveller Collection, held in Zürich, Switzerland, resulted in the sale of a rare "Una and the Lion" pattern coin of Queen Victoria for more than £870,000, only the eighth time a British coin has done so. This auction, featuring 220 British coins from the collection, realised a total of £5.7m, more than twice its pre-sale estimate of £2.7 million. The coin, commemorating Queen Victoria's coronation, was a prototype of what is considered by many to be the most beautiful coin ever made. The coin was originally purchased in the 1930s for just £14 (around £800 in today's money). This collection was famously hidden during the threat of a Nazi Invasion during World War Two. The second auction of the Traveller Collection will be offered in Zürich in November 2025 and will focus on the Central European coins within the collection.

SOLD FOR £884,163

LOT 4 Stags Auctions – Dispersal Sale of Vehicles, Tractor, Telehandler, Digger & Farm Machinery, 12-22 May (machineryauctions.stags.co.uk)

A well-known personalised numberplate "J35 TER", previously owned by the late comedian Geoffrey Rowe, known to many under his stage name Jethro, formed part of an online dispersal sale including his three Land Cruisers, farm machinery and equipment. The plate was carried on the Land Cruiser that led his funeral procession to Truro Cathedral in his beloved Cornwall in 2022. The vehicle involved was also sold in the sale for £26,500.

SOLD FOR £30,500

LOT 332 Charterhouse Auctions – Stamps, Coins, Militaria and Toys, 28-30 May (charterhouse-auction.com)

A Victorian £5 orange stamp, that was first issued in 1882, when the amount represented more than a month's wages for an agricultural worker, caused a lot of interest in Charterhouse's specialist collector's sale held over three days. The stamp – described by the auction house as one of the best examples it has seen – was cancelled in Glasgow on 15 April 1882, within the first three weeks of the stamp being printed. A total of 246,759 £5 stamps were issued to post offices for use over its life of 21 years. It is estimated that around 8,000 £5 stamps still exist, and it was the highest value pre-decimal stamp ever to be issued.

SOLD FOR £3,000

LOT 181 Spicers – The Baldry Collection Auction of Vehicles, Stationary Engines, Living Vans and Rides, 31 May (spicersauctioneers.com)

A good, old-fashioned on-site sale was held in East Yorkshire at the end of May featuring fairground items, agricultural machinery, stationary engines and all manner of items from the Baldry Collection. Organised by Spicers, the sale was held at Holme upon Spalding Moor and if you ever wanted a hand-worked children's roundabout, this was the place to be (it went for £1,000). There were a lot of bargains on the day and doubtless some items will be fettled and reappear with heftier price tags at antiques centres and sales. One standout item was the restored c1935 Hurst of Retford Showman's living van, 24ft long, 12ft high and 8ft wide, made for Charles Tuby of Doncaster.

SOLD FOR £14,500

COMING UP

LOTS TBA GW Railwayana Auctions – Railway Memorabilia & Railwaayana Auction, 19-20 July (gwra.co.uk)

Among a feast of railway items from heavyweight cast iron signs to artistic posters, already previewed for GWRA's July two-day online auction is an example of the Great Western Railway's well-known enamel advertisement sign for the Cornish Riviera featuring a map of the West Country together with claims for the area's suitability for holidaymakers and visitors. The GWR began running its Riviera Express between London Paddington and Penzance in 1904, boosting its importance in the 1930s with the company's superior publicity campaigns.

When you are placing your bid(s) please be sure about what you are bidding for. Remember to take into account that on top of the hammer price, you will have to pay a buyer's premium (usually with VAT payable on the premium). Also, allow for post and packing with remote bidding.

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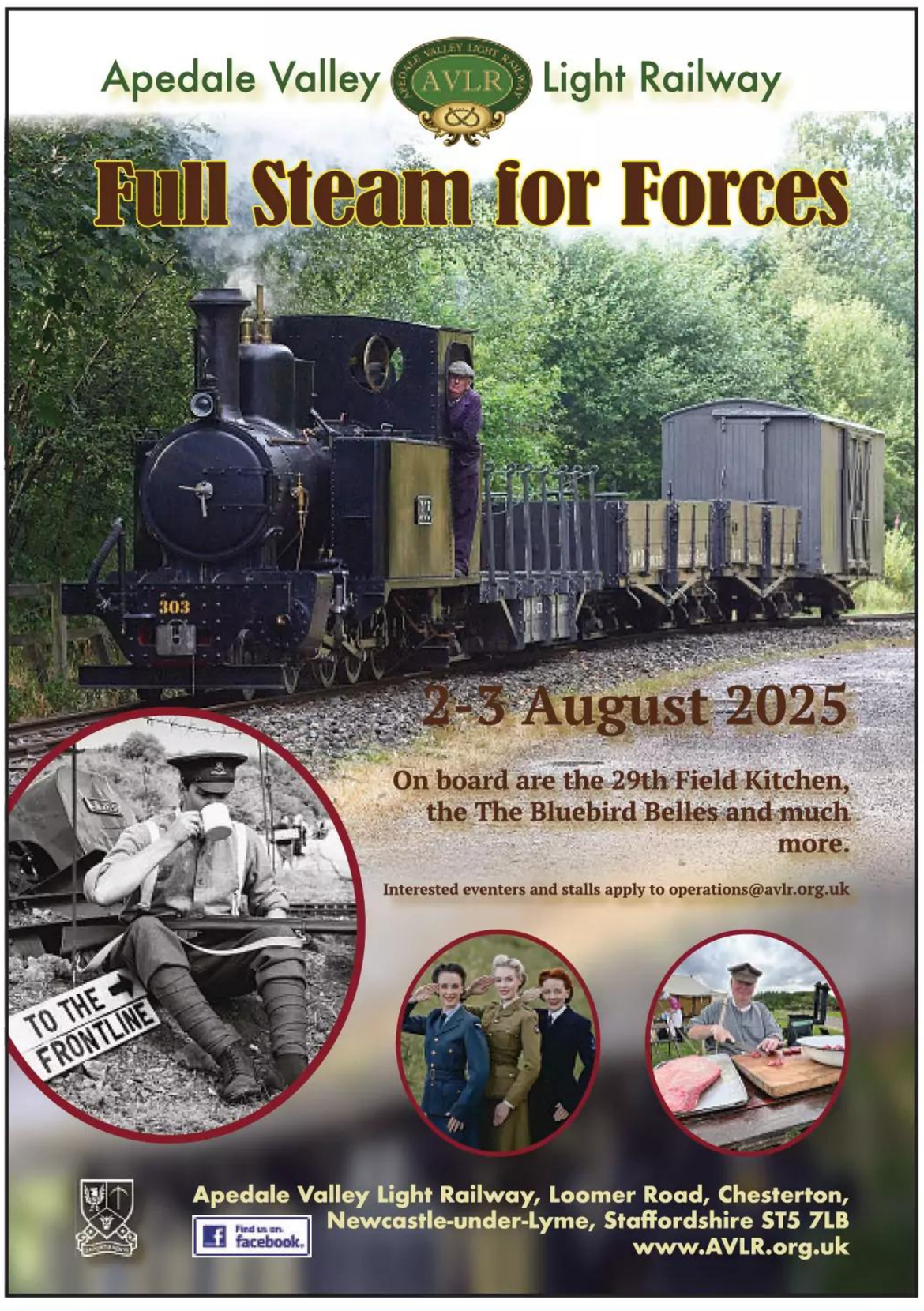

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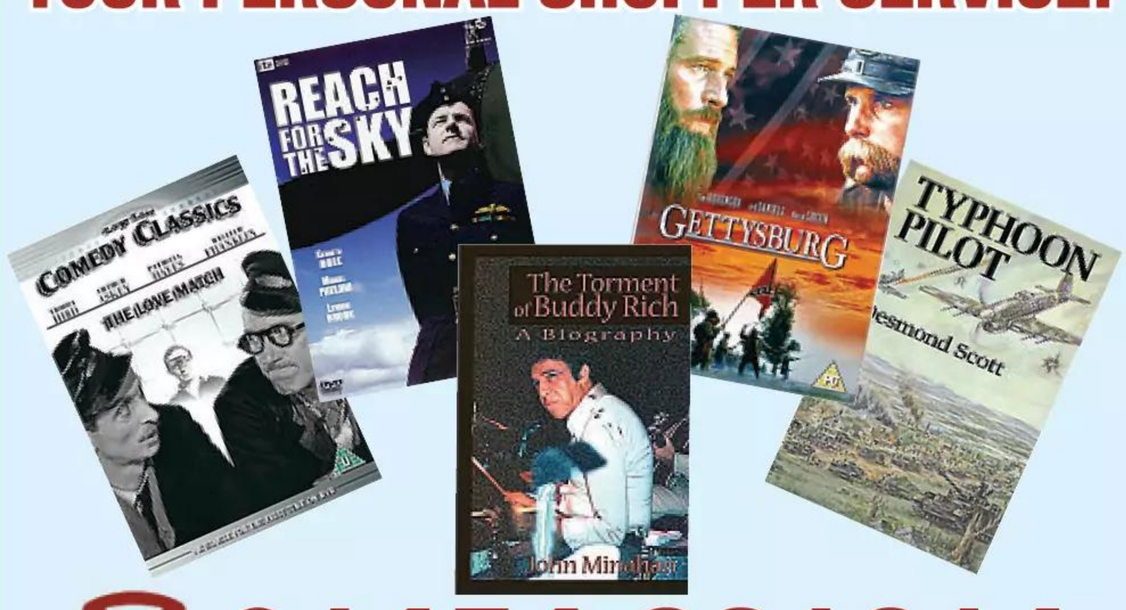

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1ST TAKE

Top of the Form

Simon Stabler talks to a star of Please Sir! and The Fenn Street Gang

If you are a fan of quiz shows, then there's a good chance that you know which famous faces were born Reginald Dwight, Harry Webb and Maurice Micklewhite. But even if you're a Chaser or an Egghead having a really good day, you might struggle to identify Meurig Wyn Jones.

"An older actor said to me with a name like Meurig Wyn Jones, when you attend an audition, people would be expecting you to speak with a strong Welsh accent," explains the actor and writer David Barry who is best known as supposed hardman/confirmed mummy's boy Frankie Abbott in the sitcom Please Sir!

"When I attended stage school, kitchen sink drama hadn't happened, we hadn't had regional accents from Albert Finney and Tom Courtenay and all that, so you were expected to speak like royalty."

Despite David being born in Bangor to Welsh parents, his father was "was a London Welshman, really", serving in Civil Defence in the capital during the blitz until returning to Wales in 1942.

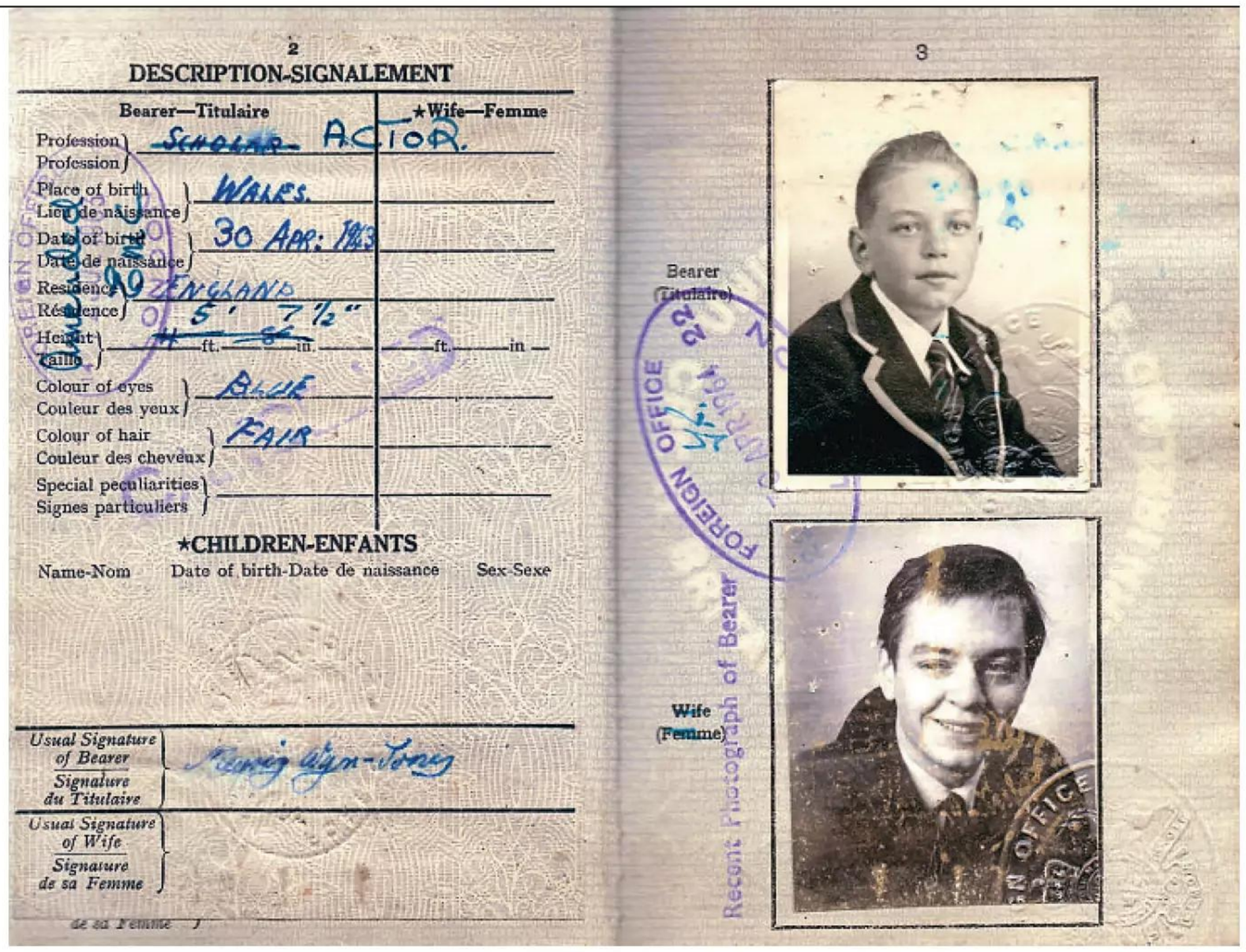
"My parents, brother and I moved to south-east England when I was 10 years old. My parents were very fond of the arts. And they were doing amateur dramatics at a Welsh society in Twickenham, doing The Corn Is Green by Emlyn Williams. And they wanted a Welsh speaking boy. So, I got the part of the schoolboy.

"And another English boy came in and he was going to Corona Academy stage school. So, I pestered my parents, I said: 'That's what I want to do. Can I go there?' They said: 'Well, it's a fee-paying school, we can't really afford it but we'll go along and investigate.' Well, when they saw me at the age of 12, I only looked about nine years old, they said: 'We can guarantee we'll get him enough work to pay his school fees,' which is what happened."

David's first stage role was at Theatre Royal Windsor in the American play Life With Father, which included Room at the Top's Heather Sears in the cast, while his feature film debut, Abandon Ship, starred

Top: Please Sir!'s Frankie Abbott (David Barry) tries to explain himself to teacher Bernard "Privet" Hedges (John Alderton).

Photographs: Courtesy of David Barry, (Main) ITV/Shutterstock



Left: David, pictured with Paul Scofield, played a Mexican boy in The Power and the Glory at the Phoenix Theatre, London in 1956. Right: David wore his Corona Academy uniform for his first passport, which he used when travelling to Europe to appear in Titus Andronicus.

Tyrone Power, Mai Zetterling, Gordon Jackson "and a host of other British actors all set in the South Atlantic, which was really a tank in Shepperton Studios."

The breakthrough role for David was a stage production of Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory, which was directed by Peter Brook and featured the likes of Paul Scofield and Harry H Corbett.

"I can remember getting Harry's autograph. I asked: 'What does the H stand for?' and he said: 'So you don't get me muddled up with the man who has his hand up Sooty.'

David was reunited with Peter Brook for a European tour of Titus Andronicus, which starred Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh.

"I auditioned for Titus Andronicus to play Laurence Olivier's grandson, young Lucius, and it was the most prestigious production of all time because it was going to six European capitals at the height of the cold war, going to Iron Curtain countries.

It was 1957 and David's first visit abroad.

"Well, for me it was very exciting, because I was a great fan of films like The Third Man and stuff like that. Our company manager warned us before we left for Europe: 'When we're in the communist countries, be very careful when you're in the bars and cafes talking politics,

because even the waiters may be party spies,' which I found very exciting."

"Vivien Leigh had problems, but she was wonderful, she spoiled me rotten."

While Olivier was at the top of his game, his marriage to Vivien Leigh was under strain.

"Vivien Leigh had problems. This was the last time they worked together. She suffered from bipolar, and she drank a lot. I think he still loved her and admired her, you could tell, but she had mood swings, but she was wonderful, she spoiled me rotten."

Following performances in Paris, Venice, Belgrade, Zagreb and Warsaw, the production came to London where it closed the soon to be demolished Stoll Theatre.

"I didn't know or think about it being demolished but I did get the sense of occasion because anybody who was anybody came to see it at the Stoll Theatre. Over the years, people say: 'Oh, yes, I came to see that production.' I do remember seeing a poster there, I think it was for South Pacific, which transferred from Drury Lane to the Stoll Theatre, and there was a dancer in it who, after a name change, became Mark Stuart, our producer and director for Please Sir!"

Appearing on television from the mid-1950s, David played Ginger in Over to William, ATV's adaptation of the Just William stories.

"They were terrifying because they went out live. We used to rehearse them in London, go on the train early on a Friday morning to a studio in Birmingham, do a camera stagger and then a dress rehearsal and it would go live at five o'clock."

Being live, they were unrecorded, and while there are a few things that David wishes he could see again "there's tons of stuff that I'm almost glad I can't see."

Throughout the 1960s, he appeared in episodes of shows such as Probation Officer, Armchair Theatre, The Plane Makers and ITV Play of the Week and, following his name change ("I experimented with a few names, but I wanted something which could vaguely sound Welsh, which I figured maybe David Barry does."), played Ross Baxter, publicity agent to the stars in eight episodes of Crossroads.

"They did a show about Noele Gordon recently (ITVX's Nolly), and it was just like that. She had her own seat like she was the Queen in rehearsals. And nobody dared sit in that seat."

In late 1968, David went back to school as one of Class 5C of Fenn Street Secondary Modern School in the London Weekend Television sitcom Please Sir! He was 25 at the time and I wondered if it came as a surprise to be cast as a character a decade younger than himself.

"No, not really, because, fortunately, I always looked younger than my years. A lot of people said we were really too old to be playing 15-year-olds, but they

Left: Marching with Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in an attempt to stop the St James's Theatre from being pulled down. Right: David made his feature film debut in Seven Waves Away, a 1957 adventure film known as Abandon Ship! in the US.

missed the point really because we were the streetwise kids and John Alderton was the naive teacher, we could teach him a few things.

"We all got on very well together. It became like a family really, you know, with Deryck Guyler and Noel Howlett. Noel was the oldest member of the company. As a very young man, he'd worked with people like Mrs Patrick Campbell, who was a friend of Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw. So, we loved hearing his stories and all their stories in fact.

"Deryck Guyler told us he did the voiceover for The Mousetrap, the radio broadcast and they paid him something like sixpence a week. There were 40 sixpences to the pound, so he was getting about £1 6*s* a year. I was in touch with the production company in 2019 and I said: 'Do you still use Deryck's voiceover.' So, they said: 'Yes, of course we do,' so he's been in it for over 70 years, longer than anyone else."

The fourth and final series of Please Sir! saw a new group of pupils, 4C, replace the departing 5C. However, it was not the end for the members of 5C who would go on to appear in the Please Sir! feature film, followed by spin-off series The Fenn Street Gang.

Filmed at Pinewood and on location, David recalls production of the feature film to be a much more relaxed affair.

"It gave us more freedom because Mark Stuart, who produced and directed in the studio, used to have terrible tantrums, and we weren't allowed any retakes. We never had a single retake. In fact, there was one episode where Peter Cleall had to say to Malcolm McFee, who played Peter Craven: 'You want to watch yourself, Peter,' to which Malcolm mistakenly replied: 'Go on, hit me then, Peter" So, everyone was called Peter. But Mark didn't do a retake. He refused to do any retakes.

> **"We all got on very well together. Please Sir! became like a family."**

"But he was better behaved doing the film because it's a lot more relaxing filming because you've got time while they're setting up the lights and all that sort of thing. It is no pressure, but there is pressure in the TV studio, especially as it was sort of like going out live in front of an audience. We started recording at 8.30pm and Mark Stuart used to boast to other directors that we were in the bar by 9.15pm."

Things improved a little from the second series of The Fenn Street Gang when LWT moved out of the former Wembley Film Studios to its new state-of-the-art headquarters on London's South Bank.

"We were a lot happier then, because in Wembley there were less places to socialise afterwards, but in London, there are dozens of places."

For the Please Sir! film, the series four episode Old Fennians Day, and all three series of The Fenn Street Gang, Sharon Eversleigh – a role originated by Penny Spencer – was played by Carol Hawkins. Malcolm McFee was absent from the first series of The Fenn Street Gang and Old Fennians Day, with his character, Peter Craven, temporarily played by future Stanley Kubrick collaborator Leon Vitali.

"He was doing a play in the West End, and they wouldn't release him. He only had a fortnight to go in the play, but he missed out on 26 episodes of The Fenn Street Gang."

Of the main Please Sir! cast, only David, John Alderton who played teacher Bernard "Privet" Hedges, Penny Spencer and Peter Cleall, plus Carol Hawkins, are still with us. And while David misses all his former colleagues, he has particularly fond memories of Barbara Mitchell who played Mrs Abbott, Frankie's overprotective mother.

"My wife and I moved into Kingston, Surrey where she lived around the corner and she came round when we moved in with a cup of sugar and a 'best wishes in your new home' card. When I went to the shops, if I saw her across the road, she'd shout: 'I've just come out for some chips, Frankie.'"

Still friends with his surviving co-stars, he visits Carol Hawkins in Spain every September and, in 2017, David, Peter Cleall and Penny Spencer were taken out to lunch by John Alderton and his wife, Pauline Collins.

Top: David has reprised the role of Frankie Abbott for a stage play and a couple of short films including comedy horror Frankula. Bottom: Filming the Please Sir! feature film on location was much more relaxed than recording the largely studio-based TV series.

An author of several books including the crime novels Each Man Kills and Willie the Actor, and the factual Please Sir! The Official History and Laurence Olivier & Vivien Leigh: The Final Curtain, David received his first writing credit on an episode of The Fenn Street Gang.

"I think I tried to write another sitcom, and I gave it to Mark Stuart and he said: 'I don't think we could use that. But if you want to have a go at The Fenn Street Gang…' So, I did, and I came up with the idea: 'What happened to Mr Abbott, the father?' So, that's how that came about, and Esmonde and Larbey, our writers, liked the idea, and I got commissioned to write it. Later on, Mark Stuart went to Thames Television, and he commissioned me to write three episodes of Keep It in the Family."

David also wrote a stage play, The Lads from Fenn Street, in which he appeared with Peter Cleall and Malcolm McFee.

"It was a sketch show, a bit like The Two Ronnies. And we said to Esmonde and Larbey, we'd like to use the characters Duffy, Abbot and Craven in between the sketches. Could we use it? They said: 'Yeah, go ahead. We don't want any money for it.' And so, we toured it for 18 weeks.

"I can remember Peter Cleall doing a sketch about Jimmy Savile, you couldn't do it now. And we did a Batman sketch with Peter Cleall playing Bruce Wayne and me playing Eamonn Andrews, as though he was on This Is Your Life."

In recent years, David has revived his most famous role in the play A Day in the Lives of Frankie Abbott, the short horror comedy film Frankula and its sequel, Bad Friday.

David's novel Mr Micawber Down Under makes him one of two people who appeared in the George and Mildred film to have written about a Dickens character in Australia (his friend Norman Eshley wrote The Dreamtime of the Artful Dodger), both of which had started life as a treatment for television.

"I've always liked Dickens and that happened a long, long time ago. I wrote it originally as a two-page synopsis as an idea for a TV series. And I was doing an ad for beer, and the director said: 'I'll give it to my literary agent'. So, he did. And the literary agent said: 'It's a fantastic idea. I'll get this off the ground if it takes me five years.' I heard no more about it. Five years later, almost to the day, the phone rang. And he said: 'What was that Dickens idea you had?'

"So, I told him, and he got me a deal with Working Title films. They commissioned it to make a TV series. But they wanted an Australian co-production and Australia had already had a Dickens series about Magwitch (1987's Great Expectations: The Untold Story) and it wasn't very successful, so they said: 'Nah, I'm not interested in anything Dickens.' So that was that. Many years went by, and I decided to write it as a novel.

"My latest book is called Tales from Soho, and although it's fictional tales, I put photographs of Soho in the book because they're real places where it takes place, and you can almost use it as a guidebook. There is one story, which is absolutely true, about a famous jazz drummer called Phil Siemen who used to play at Ronnie Scott's Club. So, I put some true stuff in also with a brief history of Soho and the pubs. I had to do a lot of research for that."

Tales from Soho is available from Amazon. To buy signed books and to see the short films Frankula and Bad Friday, go to davidbarrywriter.co.uk

Much More Than Music and Movement

Derek Lamb tunes into the history of BBC School Radio

Most readers will recall starting school, aged about five. It was often daunting, and something of a step into the unknown.

I clearly remember that day in September 1954; the little bottle of milk with a straw, rolling Plasticine into worms and a large cupboard on the wall. Filing in from the playground after lunch, we sat down to the reassuring sound of Listen With Mother. So began a six-year relationship with the radio speaker housed in the "large cupboard". The quantity, variety and quality of school radio from the 1950s to the 1970s has been considered its golden age.

When the British Broadcasting Company was established in 1922, its first director general, John Reith, stated that its purpose was to "inform, educate and entertain", so it was to be expected that there would be specific programmes for schools.

The first was in 1924. Various consultations then took place, and Mary Somerville was appointed as the first Director of Schools Broadcasting in 1929, a post she held until 1947. She was an inspired choice. At a time when radio was seen by many as an entertainment medium, she believed that drama, music and sound effects could enhance programmes and enrich educational standards.

The emphasis in the 1930s was on programmes for secondary schools. Under the title For the Schools, there were dedicated morning and afternoon slots for schools programmes, mostly on the BBC National Programme. On 22 February 1937 these were:

11.45am German for older pupils
2pm Science and gardening

Top: Junior school children enjoy a BBC School Radio broadcast.

(Lead) National Library of Wales, (Mary Somerville) BBC

BBC School Radio programmes were accompanied by a dedicated booklet, which were stylish and often included full colour illustrations.

2.20pm Music course 2
2.40pm Early stages in German

Regional stations also broadcast programmes that would appeal to pupils in that area.

Most programmes were 20 minutes long, a duration that became the norm.

Like most organisations, the BBC had contingency plans in the event of war. To ensure that regional transmissions did not assist the navigation of enemy bombers, BBC output was reduced to one station, the Home Service. War was declared on 3 September 1939 and programming was limited to news, public announcements and interlude music. However, by Wednesday 6 September, schools broadcasting resumed with programmes in the usual late morning and early afternoon slots.

Wartime evacuation, bombing and the disruption of family life meant listening to school radio became more widespread, with up to half of all schools participating. There was a regular output of 35 programmes a week. This included Singing Together, English for the Under Nines, Science programmes, Stories from World History and Senior English.

“Although most of my contemporaries enjoyed Music and Movement, there were exceptions. My wife resented ‘being a tree.’”

There was also a short news summary designed for pupils.

Postwar, the schedule was organised with dedicated timings for primary/junior, secondary and grammar school pupils. The BBC issued a termly timetable for teachers to plan lessons around the broadcasts.

As a five-year-old, a regular delight was Music and Movement. This took place in the assembly hall, where we could freely move around to engage with the story and music. Indeed, the narrator would encourage participants to “spread your arms” and find a space. For the next 20 minutes or so, we would typically row a boat across a mysterious lake to a magic kingdom. However, the king was rather sad and so we had to perform a dance to cheer him up.

Although most of my contemporaries enjoyed Music and Movement, there were exceptions. My wife resented “being a tree”; in the 1980s, my young son expressed identical sentiments.

As we progressed to the juniors, the programmes became more formal and academic. While we endured Singing Together, conducted by a very brisk man, the nature programme was much more inspiring. I fully expected to find a fossil in the coal or a rare flower on the school field.

Mary Somerville, the BBC’s first Director of Schools Broadcasting, believed that drama, music and sound effects could enhance programmes and enrich educational standards.

However, my absolute favourite was Stories from History on Thursdays. Our afternoon play time was cut short so that we could be back in class for the start at 2.40pm.

While the BBC output followed the school terms, they did continue through the half-term holidays. I always made sure that my mum sacrificed part of Woman’s Hour so that I could hear all the editions of Stories from History. Recalled with crystal clarity after 65 years, an acquaintance was equally enthusiastic about the English series that included the story of White Fang by Jack London.

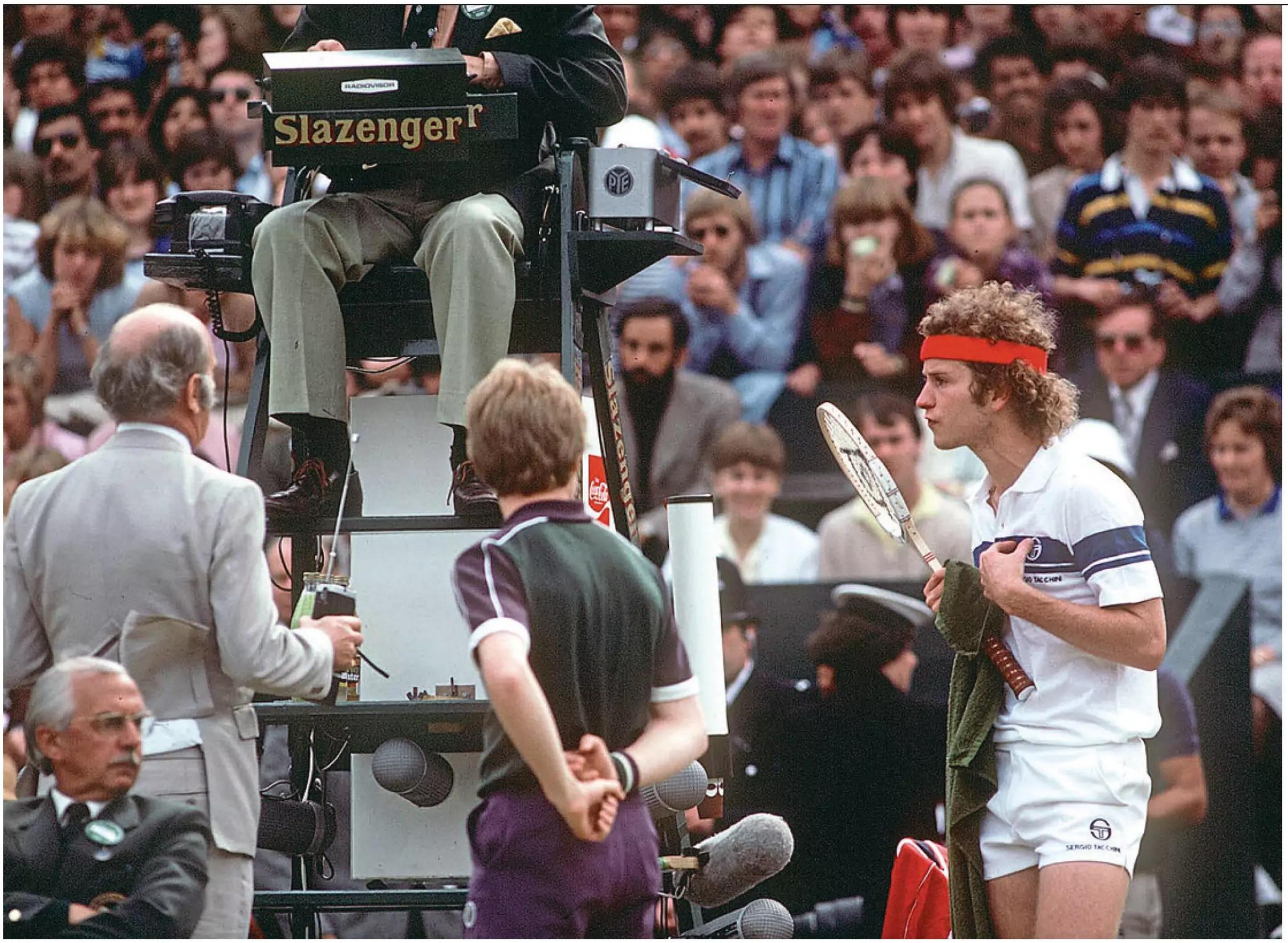
All the programmes I heard as a junior had a dedicated booklet. These were stylish and often included full colour illustrations. Those from the nature programmes could be quite dramatic. At the end of term, we were allowed to cut out the pictures for scrapbooks or calendars. During this “golden age”, the BBC produced 80 series a year; an estimated 90% of schools made some use of this provision.

In 1964, schedules referred to the “radiovision” experiment. This involved augmenting the broadcast with a 35mm filmstrip. These were widely used in the mid-1970s at secondary level. The large colour image of the Grand Coulee dam, Mississippi delta or New York skyline held the attention of the most reluctant scholars.

Schools broadcasts were not only enjoyed by pupils; from the earliest days they attracted adult listeners “eavesdropping”. Although there was little choice during the day, there is evidence that these eavesdroppers were not reluctant listeners. My grandad looked forward to the start of schools broadcasting each term. Uncle Chris was also a fan, listening in his workshop. During the school holidays, he filled the void by tuning to Woman’s Hour.

Awareness of school radio began to recede in the 1970s, when it was restricted to VHF rather than the AM frequencies where most listening took place. Schools were encouraged to record the programmes when they were broadcast outside of normal hours. Eventually, all schools material was delivered on the internet.

Just as starting school was daunting for us five-year-olds, it was an anxious time for parents too. One mother was reassured that her son was fine, “slow with his milk but good with his Music and Movement.” Sadly, both free school milk and Music and Movement are distant memories.



You Cannot Be Serious

Time is being called on Wimbledon's line judges, reports **Paul Williams**

Wimbledon will look a little different this year. The prestigious tennis tournament held annually at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, or SW19, for those in the know, will, for the first time in its long and distinguished history, be without its line judges.

Now a huge sporting fixture watched by millions around the world, the first championships were held in 1877 attracting just 200 spectators to the final. The match, rather fittingly, was won by Spencer Gore, a resident of Wimbledon, who, despite becoming the first champion, declared that tennis would never catch on and he preferred cricket anyway.

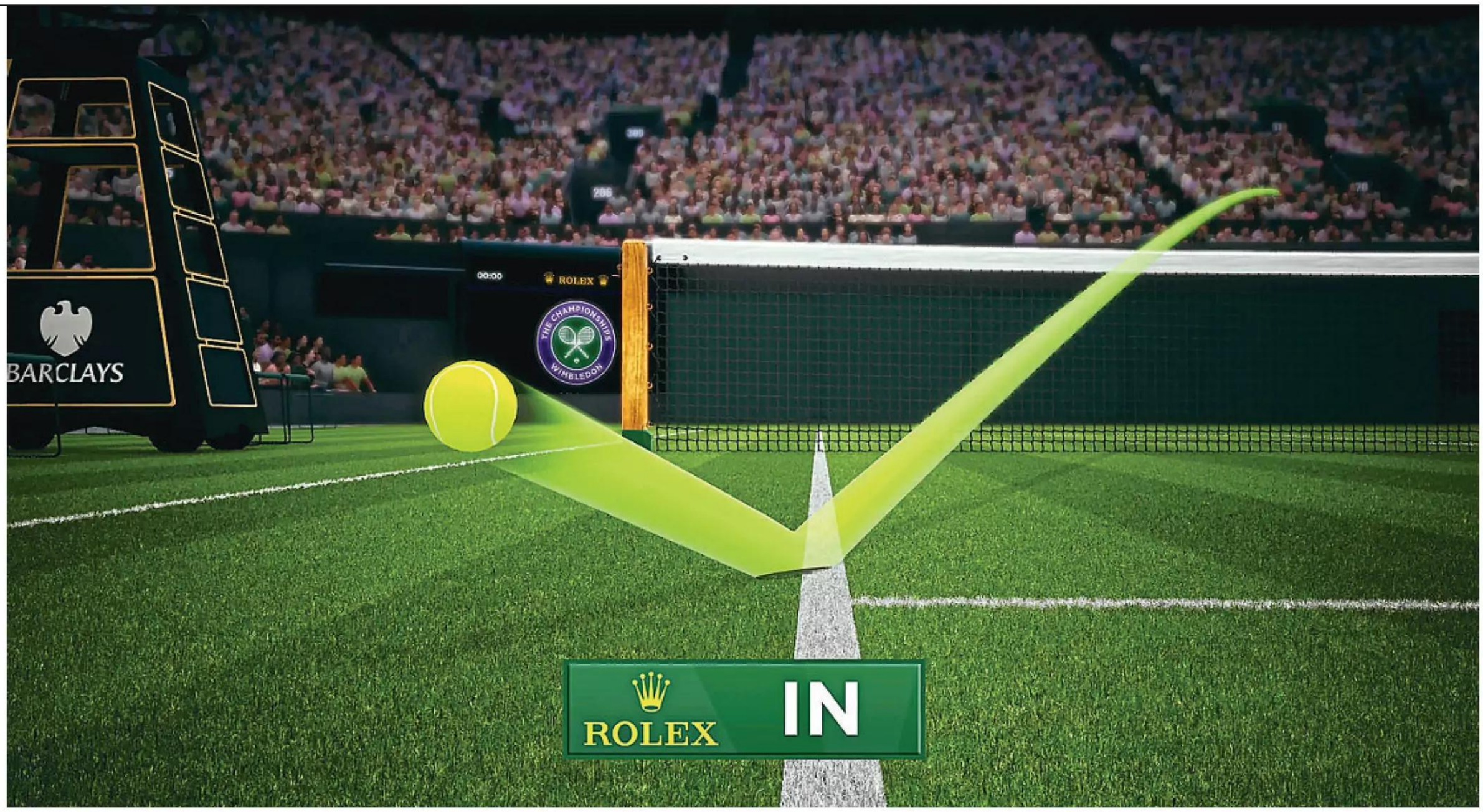
As much a part of Wimbledon as strawberries and cream, and the occasional Cliff Richard sing-along, these custodians of the court, witnesses to glories past, have finally succumbed to the future. The 2025 event, like other major tennis tournaments around the world, will use AI-based technology for line calling, replacing the human touch with something decidedly robotic in nature.

A fixture for 147 years, the line judge's role has now become redundant, their familiar cries of "out" and "fault" consigned to the TV and radio archives in favour of an automated voice considered to be quicker and more accurate.

In a statement, Sally Bolton, All England Club chief executive, said: "Having reviewed the results of the testing undertaken, we consider the technology robust, and the time is now right to take this major step in seeking maximum accuracy. We take our responsibility to balance tradition and innovation very seriously at Wimbledon. Line umpires have played a leading role in officiating at the championships for decades and we would like to thank

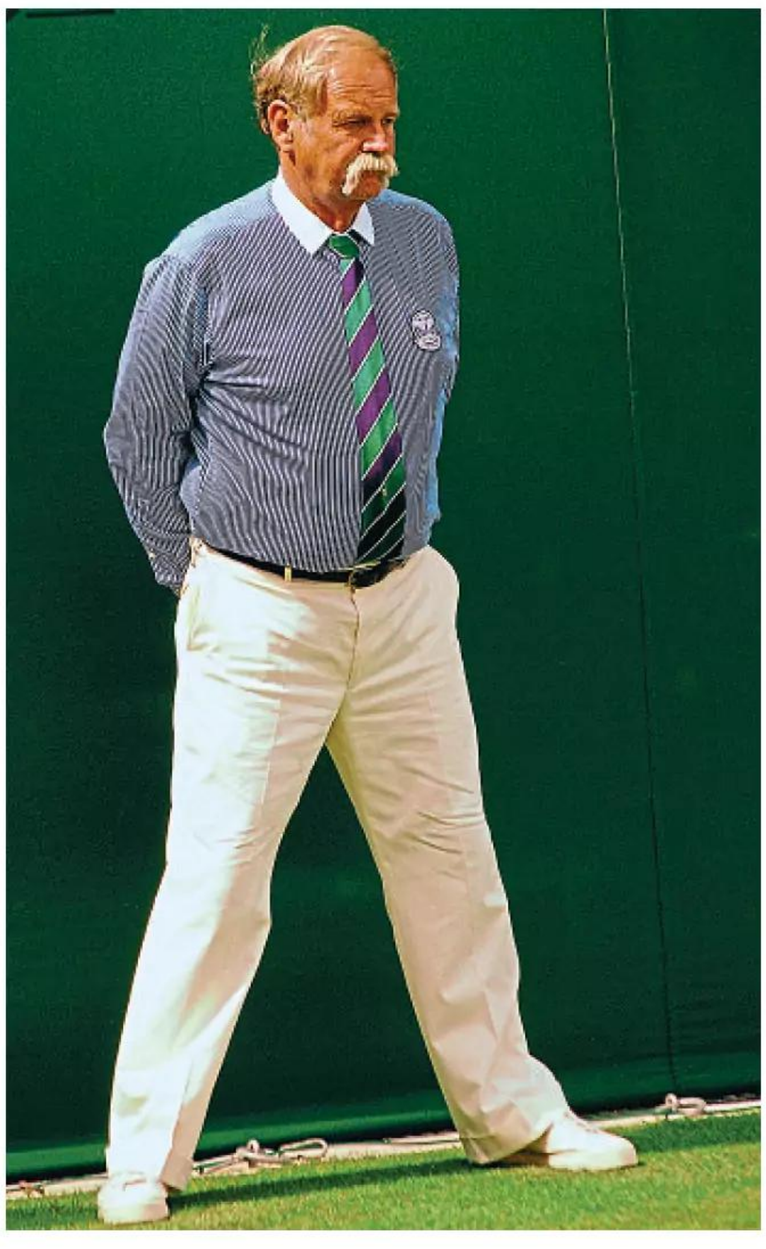
Above: John McEnroe argues with the umpire during his Wimbledon semi-final in 1981, the year in which he called umpire Edward James an "incompetent fool" during his first-round win.

Photographs: (John McEnroe) Colorsport/Shutterstock, (Judge) Creative Commons/Carine06



them for their valuable commitment, contribution and service."

Although not a full-time position, line judges have gone on to become chair umpires, a position unaffected by the changes. Working their way up through a labyrinth of smaller events, those considered to be the best-performing are then "scouted" and could, in theory, find themselves officiating on Centre Court. Following the Wimbledon decision, however, and taking away the incentive of being part of the biggest tennis tournament in the world, there are legitimate concerns about the future supply of line judges for smaller events and, ultimately, the next generation of chair umpires.



Malgorzata Grzyb, chair of the Association of British Tennis Officials, said: "The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club's announcement last year regarding the introduction of live electronic line calling was disappointing for many British line umpires, though not unexpected given that technology is increasingly being integrated not just in tennis, but in sport more broadly.

"While Wimbledon and other events will no longer use line umpires, opportunities remain available. Line umpires can transition into the role of match assistants at events where live electronic line calling is being used, and we have seen significant interest in this new role. As a result, the reduction in line umpire opportunities has been partially offset by the introduction of the match assistant role, meaning we have seen a reduction of approximately 20% of officiating days available for line umpires.

"Despite these changes, interest in officiating remains strong in the UK and we have not seen a decline in the number of people applying to become umpires. However, the pathway for new officials has evolved over the last year; rather than qualifying first as a line umpire before progressing to a chair umpire qualification, new officials are now trained in both roles from the outset."

"As much a part of Wimbledon as strawberries and cream, and the occasional Cliff Richard sing-along, these custodians of the court, witnesses to glories past, have finally succumbed to the future."

For the officials, a typical day at Wimbledon begins long before players step on to the court. During the morning briefing, matches are allocated and last-minute checks to uniforms take place to ensure everyone looks the part. Line judges rotate around the courts to ensure they stay fresh, and they have one eye on the unpredictable English weather, too, as they could find themselves running from a downpour or standing in the baking sun for hours on end. When the day's play is over, the officials join a debriefing session where any issues or contentious decisions are analysed and discussed.

Above: Hawk-Eye technology is used in tennis specifically for electronic line calling. Left: A Wimbledon line judge resplendent in pinstriped shirt and white trousers.

Predominantly known for their discretion and ability to appear inconspicuous, on-court officials have on occasions, been right at the heart of the action. Perhaps the most famous (or infamous) example is the 1981 John McEnroe rant when the American star continually berated an official for giving, what he claimed, was an incorrect call. On 22 June, playing in the first round, McEnroe was incensed when chair umpire Edward James declared the ball "out" when McEnroe thought he had served an ace.

Approaching the official, he continued to vehemently question the decision, calling James an "incompetent fool" before delivering the immortal "you cannot be serious" line. Later in the match, McEnroe rounded on the official again, this time calling him "the absolute pits of the world", an outburst which cost him a penalty point. The incident became a huge news story and James found himself right in the middle of it. Years later, the umpire revealed it was the first and last time he officiated a McEnroe match, and in fact, the two men have never spoken since that day.

More recently, in 2022, the new "bad boy" of tennis Nick Kyrgios, of Australia, caused outrage in a first-round match when he referred to a line judge as a "snitch" after the official complained to the chair umpire about the player's behaviour. The exchange did not go down well and, on leaving the court, Kyrgios spat in the direction of spectators.

A form of electronic line calling has, to a lesser extent, been in use at Wimbledon since 2007, but it is the introduction of the technology to Centre Court which will bring the curtain down on decades of tradition. Resplendent in their navy jackets, pinstriped shirts and white trousers or skirts, around 300 line judges were deployed annually, earning around £200 per day plus expenses.

The introduction of the new system has received a mixed response from players, ready to acknowledge the speed and accuracy of electronic line calling, but reluctant to see the tradition and drama associated with line judges fade away. Although new roles, including match assistant and video referee, have been created, it is, without doubt, the demise of the on-court officials that will have die-hard tennis fans up and down the land proclaiming: "No line judges at Wimbledon? You cannot be serious!"

A TRUE SPORTSMAN

Colin Allan profiles Roger Taylor who kept the flag flying for British men's tennis during the late 1960s and early 70s

It's match point to Britain's Roger Taylor in the Wimbledon quarter-final of 1973. He is playing the precocious 17-year-old Swede, Björn Borg. Taylor had been five games to one up in the final set but the future star of world tennis had clawed his way back to five-all. The Brit then breaks the Swede's serve to make it 6-5. Taylor has three match points on his own serve. He doubles faults on the first. On his next match point, Roger Taylor proved what a great sportsman he was as well as a superb tennis player. He served what both the line judge and umpire thought was a winner. "Game, set and match," declared the umpire. But Borg looked perplexed by the lack of an "out" call. Taylor appeared equally confused. He generously insisted to the umpire that his serve was out.

Nowadays, Hawk-Eye line technology deals with disputed calls but that was well in the future. Taylor then lost the replayed point. Finally, much to the relief of the home crowd, a bold second service on the next point gave Taylor victory in a truly cliff-hanger of a match. The British number one had won 6-1, 6-8, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5. Borg would have to wait a bit longer to dominate Wimbledon.

The incident on match point was typical of the way Roger Taylor played his tennis; determined but fair. He had been taught the rudiments of the game by his mother who always insisted on sportsmanship. Taylor carried the torch for British men's tennis throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. He appeared in three Wimbledon singles semi-finals – 1967, 1970 and 1973. He also reached the Australia Open semi-finals in 1970 and won the US Open men's double titles in 1971 and 1972.

However, the handsome, dark-haired Yorkshireman broke the mould in terms of British tennis backgrounds. He didn't come from a privileged Home Counties family or experience the garden party atmosphere of affluent tennis clubs. Roger Taylor's home was in the steel city of Sheffield. Perhaps it was Yorkshire grit that got him to the top of British tennis.

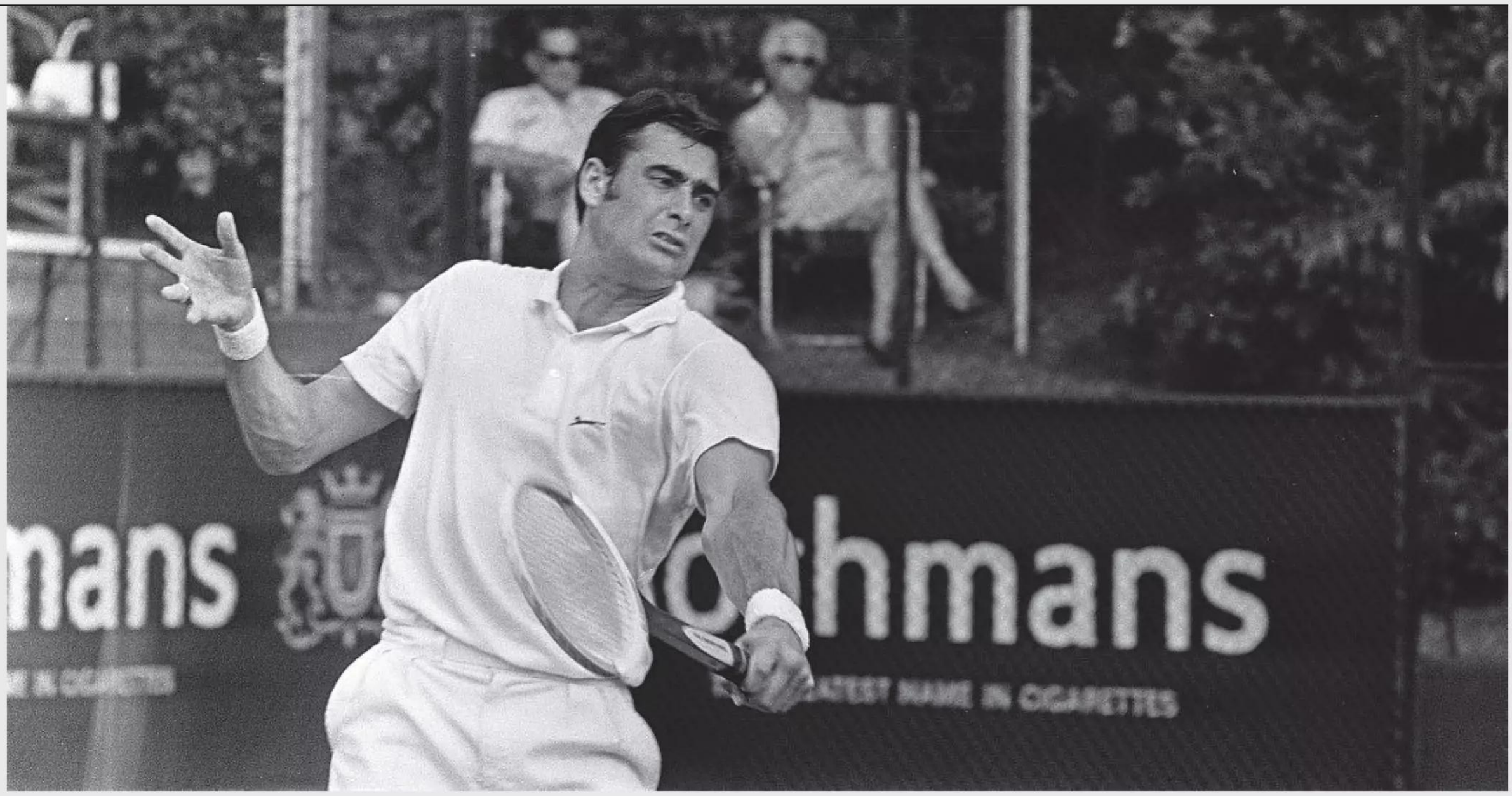
For Taylor and his family, competition on the tennis circuit entailed sacrifices, scrimping and saving. For instance, on one of his first trips abroad to compete in the French Open, he soon ran out of money. A friend promised to pay for Taylor's accommodation but when the time came to pay the bills, Roger refused to accept the offer. "This is my responsibility," he said and somehow managed to pay up.

At 15 years of age, he was good enough to enter Wimbledon's junior competition. Critics complained about his strange, golf-style grip of the racquet when serving. By the next season, he had changed his style of service, and it was soon to become his main weapon. Taylor was to confess: "I knew they were right but didn't want to admit it. So, I practised all winter in a Sheffield park."

Such was the transformation that Taylor became renowned for his powerful serve. There was more to Roger's game than a big serve. Carefully, methodically, he ironed out some of his other weaknesses. One problem area that needed particular attention was his tendency to let his emotions lose him points. He was prone to bouts of impatience at his own errors until: "I realised I was making matters worse. Matches were being lost because I ignored the golden rule that the only thing to do about a lost point is to forget it."

Taylor enjoyed his first long tournament run at the 1967 Wimbledon Championships. In the fourth round he saw off South Africa's Cliff Drysdale 3-6, 11-9, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. Taylor mixed up his game so well that Drysdale could not maintain his rhythm. His serve was so

Photographs: Dutch National Archives



effective that Drysdale could only win nine points in 10 games.

In his quarter-final tie, Taylor beat Ray Ruffles of Australia in straight sets – 6-4, 8-6, 6-4. He came back from 1-3 down in the third set to concede only four points in the next four games.

Now the question was whether Taylor could become the first British man to reach a Wimbledon singles final since Bunny Austin in 1938. His opponent was the West German Wilhelm Bungert who prevailed in a close encounter 6-4, 6-8, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4. Taylor explained: "I started off very nervously. But at two sets up in front of a home crowd... I think the match went away from me in the fourth set." Taylor had the expected advantage in service power, 11 aces against four, but Bunger's returns were generally more effective.

Roger Taylor made the Wimbledon semi-finals again in 1970. In the quarter-final, he beat American Clark Graebner in straight sets; 6-3, 11-9, 12-10. He had been leading in the third set when rain stopped play for the day. Of course, this was in the days before the tie break at 6-6 was introduced. The next day, Graebner saved two match points. Taylor was to confess: "The pressure was really hard at that point. I began to get a bit tense." But at 11-10 Taylor broke through to win the set and the match 12-10.

In the semi-final he was up against the wily and experienced Ken Rosewall of Australia. The Centre Court was in a worn state at that stage in the tournament and a gusty wind did not help. Despite being 35, Rosewell still possessed the speed to deal with Taylor's power play. The Australian prevailed 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. In defeat, Taylor was typically philosophical: "I was poor in the first round and could have been knocked out so from that point of view [to reach the semis], it's been a good tournament."

He reached the semi-finals again in 1973, having seen off Borg in the aforementioned last-eight tie. In the semis, he had a great chance of reaching the final. He was up against the second seed, Jan Kodeš of Czechoslovakia. Taylor was leading 5-4 in the final set when rain interrupted play for 40 minutes. But the Czech won the next three games to deny Britain a finalist. Kodeš's ground strokes were so fierce that Taylor's volleying could not hold them. In a very close game, which came down to fine margins, and after a titanic struggle the Czech won in five sets 8-9, 9-7, 5-7, 6-4, 7-5. Taylor took his defeat well: "I played well but I didn't win. That's life."

"I knew they were right but didn't want to admit it. So, I practised all winter in a Sheffield park."

Roger Taylor's Wimbledon experiences had shown what pressure British players were under in front of a willing home crowd. Tim Henman also experienced it. Henman reached four Wimbledon semi-finals in 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2002. It took Andy Murray with his Wimbledon triumphs in 2013 and 2016 to finally lay to rest the ghost of Fred Perry and his 1936 title.

However, Roger Taylor should be remembered for keeping British hopes alive in the 1960s and early 1970s. His determination, work ethic and, perhaps above all, his sportsmanship gave British tennis followers and television viewers someone to cheer and someone to admire.

Above: Roger Taylor in action on the outdoor clay courts of Hilversum at the 1969 Dutch Open. Left: Björn Borg, who would later win five consecutive Wimbledon titles, faced Taylor in a 1973 Wimbledon quarter-final in which the Sheffield-born player triumphed.

The Chippy Tour

John Greeves meets the man who has visited 131 fish and chip shops in 15 months

In the last 30 years, the number of traditional chippies has fallen from 30,000 to 10,000. In recent times, Stephen Peel from Penketh in Warrington, Cheshire, a life-long lover of fish and chips, has visited 131 chip shops across the country. He describes the chippy fare as "hearty food" and wants to support the industry and draw attention to the fact that many of these traditional and family run businesses are being forced to close because of rising costs. His chippy tour reads something like the Johnny Cash song I've Been Everywhere, taking him and his wife, Susan (they travel everywhere together), from Cornwall, to middle England, both south and north in the country as well as parts of Wales and Scotland.

"I'm spending over £500 a month, it's hitting my wallet a bit but it's for a good cause," he says.

In his travels, Stephen has come across some incredible fish and chip shops but believes Yorkshire still is the epicentre of the industry. He's found the cost for an average portion of fish and chips to be around £10, although up north, prices are generally cheaper and cost more in the region of £8 a head. The cheapest chippy Stephen has visited in the UK is Mathews Chippy in Grimsby, Lincolnshire with meals costing £3 below the average price elsewhere. He still feels a portion of fish and chips is better value for money than a pizza, bucket chicken, burger and other takeaways, and has fewer additives and preservatives.

Stephen uses a five-star review to score each premises, and the criteria not only includes the quality of the food, but also takes account of the shop's presentation, cleanliness, combined with the overall experience of good customer service. This includes a warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere where the customer is made to feel almost at home. Fish is important on each order but finding things which are made in-house like their own pies, pea fritters, or tartar sauce or mushy peas also increase the score.

As for the perfect portion, for Stephen "the fish must be fresh and clean without

A food warmer has been fitted in Stephen's Ford Ranger pick-up truck to allow him to sample his takeaway in the best possible conditions.

Photograph: (Main) Stephen Peel

discolouration, of a decent thickness encased in a light crispy batter. It mustn't be greasy, but light in colour and when you break open the batter, there should be a sweet earthy smell."

The chips undergo similar scrutiny and "need to be golden, firm and plump and caving in when a little pressure is applied in order to hit the sweet spot." Stephen prefers them cooked in beef dripping and not seeded oil, as the flavour he says is always better this way. His favourite condiments are Sarson's vinegar and a curry sauce.

Steve has adapted his Ford Ranger pick-up truck for the chippy tour. After his undercover visit to a fish and chip shop, Stephen and Susan drive to a nearby spot not far from the chippy. There's a drop-down table at the back with an attached stool. A 12-volt socket in the back of the truck with a food warmer keeps the food at an ideal 65C until they are ready to eat. Stephen always ensures the review is written first, before Susan brings out the food and joins him to share in another chippy delight.

"I get recommendations all the time for chippies," Stephen says, "so I have a Google map which I update all the time." After he visits a chip shop he then decides if he's going to keep them on the recommendation list. "We try to cover as many as we can in one trip, but often we have to spend the night away like we did when visiting Hull."

Stephen's quest isn't about creating a league table for chippies, as he says: "I don't go looking for the worse, I go looking for the best great chippies that people will turn up to. I'm only interested in keeping the fish and chips shops going and not helping to close them." There will be more closures, but Stephen believes despite the cost of living and rising costs, "the hardy traditional businesses will push through and weather the storm." He urges us all to support them, saying once they're gone, like other small family businesses, from our streets, towns and communities they'll be unlikely to return.

Stephen's Top Five UK chippies:

1st: Green Lane Chippy, Leigh, Lancashire
2nd: The Old Forge Café, Bugle, Cornwall
3rd: Charlie's of Mobberley, Mobberley, Cheshire
4th: George A Green Fisheries, Wakefield, West Yorkshire
5th: Hennighan's, Machynlleth, Powys
Go to thechippytour.com to discover more.

Hap-pie Days

A tiny item in the local press caught my eye that a traditional pie and mash shop had opened at the famous Box Hill in Surrey. I thought I must just go and have a look at that – and I did. Travelling to Box Hill, I drove un the famous zig-zag road to the few shops and restaurants at the top. There was no sign of any pie shop, so I went on past the look-out point and, about half a mile down the road, adjacent to a derelict pub was Porsha's Pie and Mash (07398 097941, porshaspieandmash.co.uk) on a big sign on a small shop by the roadside.

We enjoyed our main course followed by a lovely fruit pie as a dessert. There is limited space inside but there are tables and chairs outside, so it's best to visit on good weather days.

Demand is particularly strong at weekends, jellied eels are also on the menu, and customers come from all parts of Surrey and Sussex to enjoy the old cockney favourite.
Ron McGill, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey

Owner Denzil and his wife launched Porsha's pie and mash at Surrey's Box Hill earlier this year.

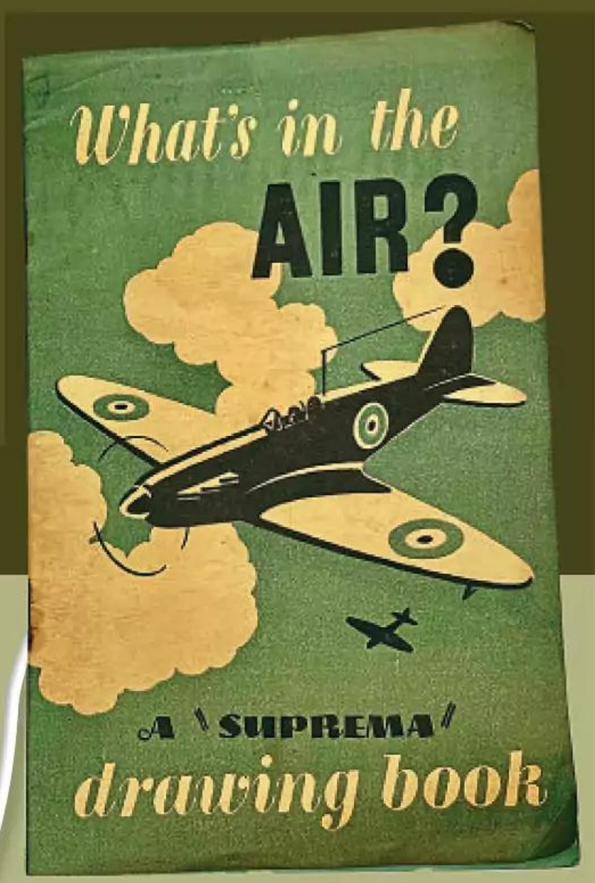
Wheels on Wheels

A heritage railway has teamed up with a local cheesemonger to run special "cheese trains". The Spa Valley Railway (01892 300141, spavalleyrailway.co.uk), which operates between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge, will be running The Kent Cheese Train, a return trip onboard a steam train, where passengers can enjoy a selection of local cheeses, on 5-6 July. Operated in partnership with The Cheese Shop, Tunbridge Wells, a £35 ticket offers all-day travel on the railway, along with four individual portions of cheese, chutney and crackers, plus a complimentary small cider or white, red or rose wine or soft drink. Booking is essential and further cheese trains are planned for August, September and October.

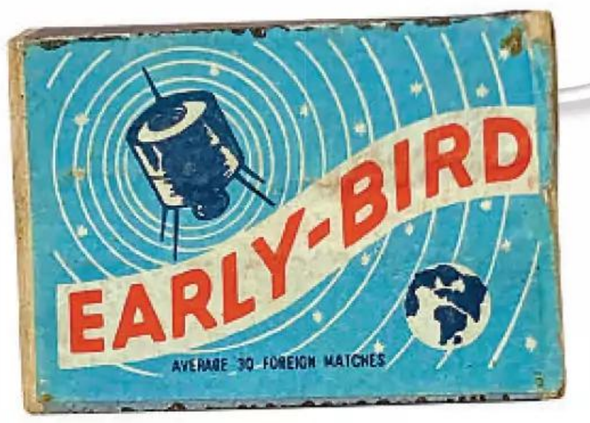
The Kent Cheese Train offers a selection of locally produced cheeses and a complimentary drink.

If you know of a regional delicacy that has all but died out or would like to share your food and drink memories, then let us know via info@bestofbritishmag.co.uk or at the address given on page 4.

TREASURES *In the* ATTIC



Brian Howes unearths some nostalgic collectables that might be discarded as worthless junk but actually have a value to today's collectors. Can you estimate what each object might be worth and pick out which one is the big-money item? **The values are printed on page 80.**



1 Early Bird

This old matchbox shows a picture of the Early Bird (Intelsat I) satellite which was launched in 1965. This was the first operational commercial satellite to provide a scheduled transoceanic television service. It was capable of television broadcast and telephone forwarding between Europe and the United States, and operated for four years.

3 Sky watchers

It was important to keep children watching the sky during World War Two for them to clearly identify enemy aircraft. This What's in the Air? Suprema drawing book was also a handy way of steering children away from bad propaganda material, warning parents to "be careful what your children copy". This was one of six books in the Suprema series.

4 Wilde about Marty

Born Reginald Leonard Smith in Blackheath, south-east London in 1939, Marty Wilde gained fame as one of Britain's foremost rock'n'roll stars of the 1950s and 60s. His big hits included Teenager in Love, Donna, Sea of Love, and Bad Boy. This plastic heart badge would have been sold to fans at Marty's concerts during the 1960s for around sixpence.

5 In the can

This small metal can dates from the 1920s and was made by the Dairy Supply Company of Museum Street, London. They were made in different sizes and this rare example is only five inches tall. It was designed to hold a small quantity of cream and could be fixed to the dairyman's belt as he travelled the streets with a push-along dairy cart.

2 Light fantastic

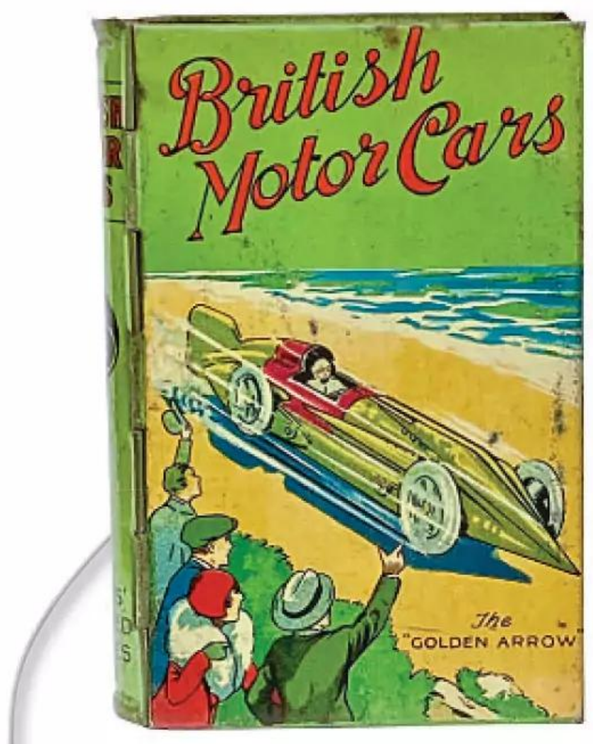
This super-rare spill holder dates back to the days when grocery shops were illuminated by gas or oil lamps. Biscuit-makers Meredith & Drew didn't miss a trick when it came to clever advertising opportunities and gave away these tinplate wall-mounted spill holders to shopkeepers who stocked the firm's biscuits.

6 Sweet dreams

"For sleep and energy" is how Cadbury described Bournvita, the popular bedtime malted chocolate drink that has been enjoyed around the world since its launch in the 1930s. These nightcap "sweet dreams" Bakelite mugs were designed in the 1950s and distributed by Cadbury during a promotional campaign.

9 Washday wonder

Remember Rinso? I can remember my mother using it on washday, which was usually a Monday in our house. Rinso contained Solium which, according to the packet, "washes whiter than ever" and made "whites come whiter than new". This special wartime packet still contains the original washing powder.



7 Record breaker

This lovely old tin once contained toffees made by J Lyons & Co. It was one of a series of six tins showing record-breaking British ships, aeroplanes, trains and cars. The Golden Arrow car gained the World Speed Record for Great Britain in March 1929 when Sir Henry Segrave reached a mean speed over a flying mile of 231.36mph.

10 Time for tea

This enamel sign was one of thousands of similar Nectar Tea cup and saucer signs that were once fixed to railway station walls all over Britain. Having been removed from the railways, a large quantity of them were discovered stored away in London in the 1980s. The signs were made by the Patent Enamel Company of Selly Oak, Birmingham.

11 Sweet sensations

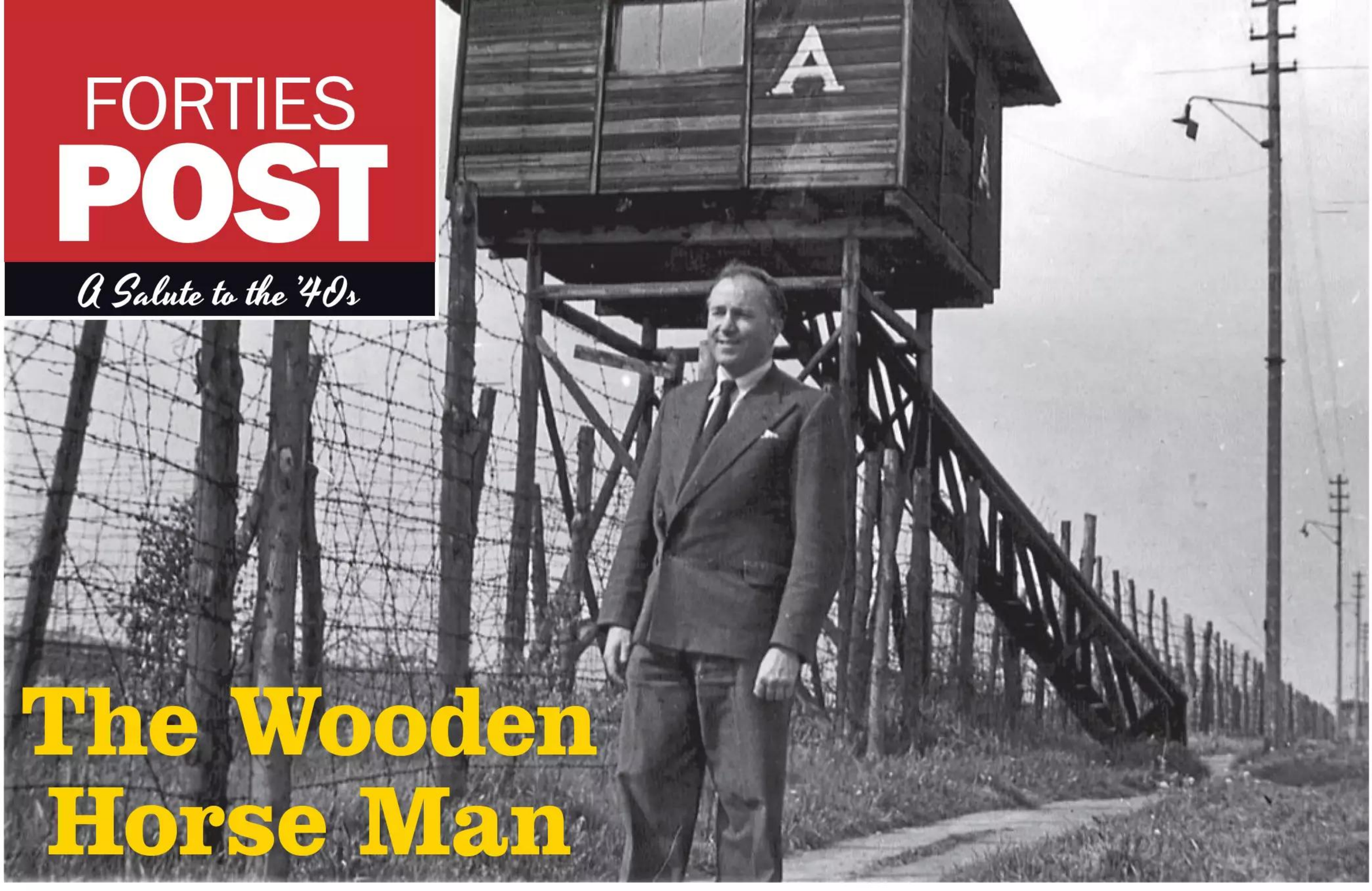
This tin was one of a set of tiny sweet tins issued by the Clarnico confectionery company of Hackney Wick, east London. It originally contained small round sweets known as cachous. The locomotive pictured on the tin is Great Northern Railway Class A1 1470 Great Northern, which was the first of 52 A1 Class locomotives to enter service in the early 1920s.

12 Matchbox memories

Dating back to 1959, this Matchbox series Austin K4 army water wagon was one of a large series of military vehicles released by Lesney Products in the late 1950s. To try and boost the sales of the Austin, a Matchbox collector lapel badge was placed inside all the boxes of this model. I remember proudly pinning mine on to the lapel of my school blazer.

8 Police force

One of Britain's finest ever rock bands, the Police were formed in London in 1977 when Sting, Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers got together and hit the new wave/reggae rock scene with force. Written by Sting, Message in a Bottle was released in September 1979 and raced up the charts to become the band's first No 1



The Wooden Horse Man

Charles Rollings tells the story of airman turned author Eric Williams, who escaped from Stalag Luft III with the aid of a wooden vaulting horse

Unlike most World War Two veterans who immortalised themselves in print, Eric Williams was no "one-book wonder", instead producing two bestselling novels based on a mere 10 months as a prisoner of war and his now-legendary escape, plus a travel memoir, two adventure stories, four anthologies, and a successful screenplay.

Born in London on 13 July 1911, he ran John Lewis's "Design for Living" department before war compelled him to volunteer for the RAF. In June 1940, he began training as an observer, eventually being commissioned and joining No 75 (New Zealand) Squadron RAF at Newmarket, Suffolk. On the night of 17 December 1942, the squadron's Short Stirlings set out to bomb Fallersleben, and Williams' was one of four shot down. The entire crew were captured.

Following incarceration in two prison camps – Dulag Luft, the aircrew interrogation centre near Frankfurt am Main, and Oflag XXIB in Schubin, Poland – Williams was sent to Stalag Luft III, the main camp for allied aircrew officers, at Sagan in Lower Silesia. On 29 October 1943, he escaped with Artillery Lieutenant RMC Codner and Flight Lieutenant OLS Philpot after they'd spent the summer tunnelling from beneath a wooden vaulting horse; all three made the "home run" (Philpot travelling separately).

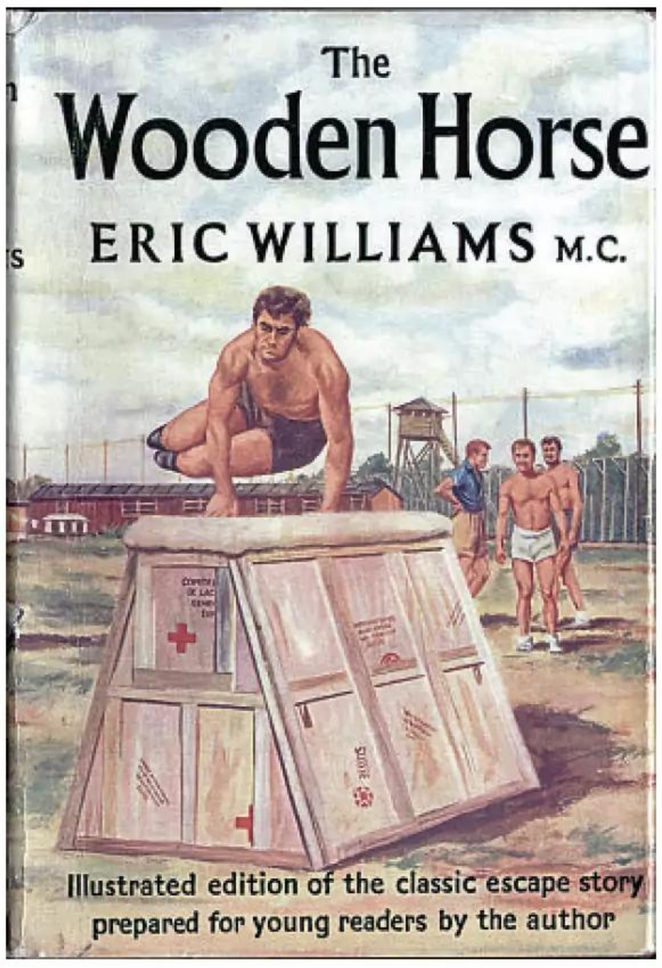
On leave in England, Williams visited the kinfolk of some fellow PoWs and, realising how little they knew of the wire-bound world, decided to write about his experiences. As prison camps were on the secret list, he wrote the book as fiction – calling himself "Peter Howard" and Codner "John Clinton", giving other PoWs aliases, and supressing references to escape. But it was so well written that publisher Jonathan Cape accepted it within two days. In May 1945, it appeared as Goon in the Block – the cry prisoners raised whenever Germans entered their barracks. It sold out within a week but, because of paper rationing, was not reprinted.

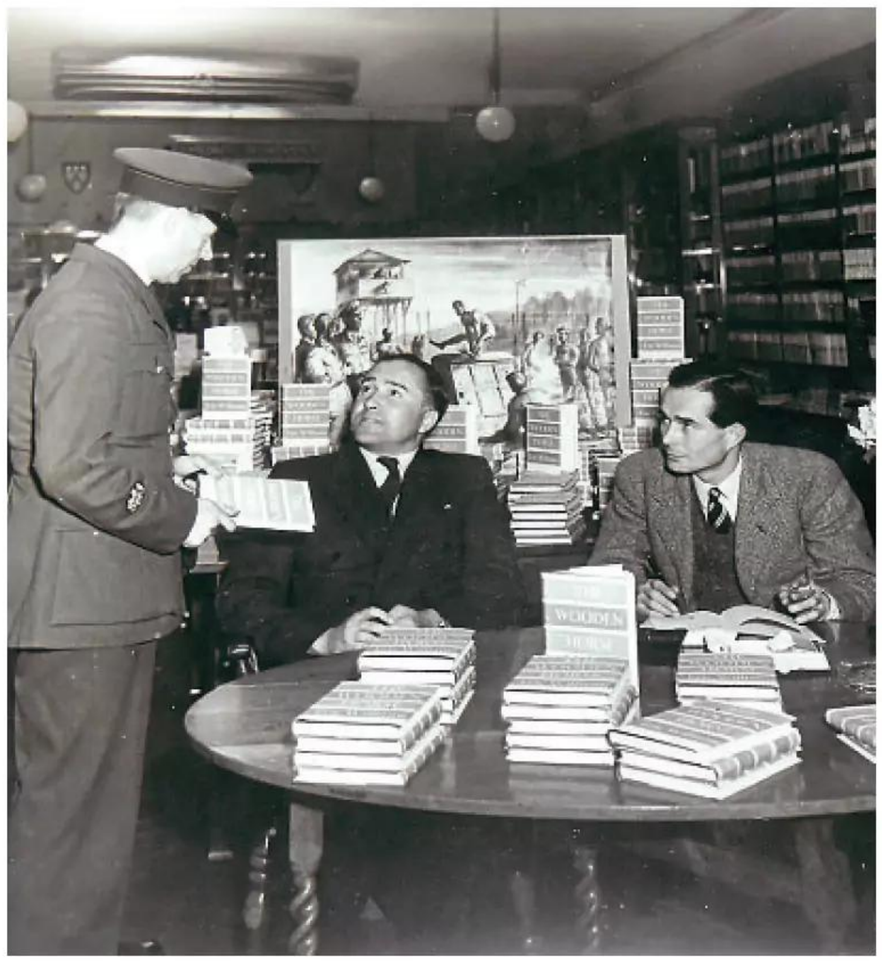
Encouraged by positive reviews, Williams decided to recount his exploits in full. The finished manuscript, which he called The Sagan Horse, retained most of the aliases from Goon in the Block, but added Philpot (as "Philip Rowe") and described in detail the escape and the subsequent flight by "Peter" and "John" through Nazi Germany and occupied Denmark – although in some places he stretched the truth for dramatic effect.

Jonathan Cape and six other publishers rejected it, claiming war books were no longer popular. So, on demobilisation, Williams returned to John Lewis, this time as its book-buyer. Over a business lunch, Ronald Politzer, publicity manager for William Collins, asked how he'd escaped from Germany. Williams proffered his manuscript, which Politzer advised him to cut and retitle The Wooden Horse. Williams therefore dropped the first half, keeping only that covering Stalag Luft III and his escape.

Collins published The Wooden Horse in February 1949, cautiously printing only 10,000 copies. But after glowing reviews it sold out in three days; Collins had to reprint a further 10,000 copies almost every week for 10 weeks – and were still reprinting in December.

Collins sold the film rights to documentary-maker Jack Lee, of London Films, who engaged Leo Genn, Anthony Steel and David Tomlinson as stars. Lee invited Williams to write the screenplay and





Left: The abridged edition of The Wooden Horse, for younger readers, featured two maps, 13 extra drawings and a colour frontispiece that adorned the dust jacket. Right: Eric Williams and fellow escapee RMC Codner at a 1949 book signing of The Wooden Horse.

act as technical adviser on location in West Germany. Williams quit his job and travelled there with his wife, Sibyl. Driving a green touring Bentley, he took a roundabout route through France, Italy and Austria.

Outside Munich, they stopped off at a hospital to visit Franz von Lindeiner-Wildau, the former commandant of Stalag Luft III. Wearing a woollen dressing gown and carpet slippers, Oberst von Lindeiner looked shrunken and did not appear to have long to live. "Ah!" he uttered on seeing Willams. "The Wooden Horse man." Williams gave him two tins of coffee – still rare in Germany – but cut short his stay. "There was really nothing to say," he wrote later. "It seemed like kicking a man when he's down."

The film The Wooden Horse became Britain's third biggest box-office attraction of 1950. Demand for the book rose again; by the end of the year, it had gone through 16 impressions with sales of 250,000. Collins delayed the paperback until 1953, when it appeared in the Fontana imprint. The edition that most schoolboys of the era read was an abridged one for younger readers, issued in 1955. Two maps and 13 extra drawings – brilliantly highlighting dramatic moments in the camp and on the run – were specially commissioned for this superb edition, which featured a colour frontispiece that also adorned the dust jacket. By 1974 it had been reprinted 10 times.

Once he had finished with the film, Williams polished the material jettisoned from The Sagan Horse, which was published in 1951 as The Tunnel. Almost as popular as its predecessor, it went through 10 printings by 1980. The first paperback edition appeared in 1955. Both books were reprinted in paperback almost annually, went through book club, abridged and large-print editions, and enjoyed enormous success in the Commonwealth and, especially, the US and mainland Europe (being translated into nine languages).

Williams followed The Tunnel with an anthology entitled The Escapers. Containing 17 thrilling excerpts from accounts by escapers dating back to the 16th century, it was published by Collins in conjunction with Eyre & Spottiswoode in September 1953, with a second impression later that month.

His excursion with Sybil through western Europe was the subject of his fifth book, Complete and Free, published by Eyre & Spottiswoode in April 1957. Opening as a travel memoir and segueing into a work of minor philosophy, it proved almost as popular as his escape stories, going through six impressions in its first month of publication and into Pan paperback in 1959. In 1958, Weidenfeld & Nicolson published his second anthology, Great Escape Stories. Aimed at younger readers, this presented 12 extracts from books set in World War Two and the cold war, went through more library and paperback editions than any other Eric Williams book except The Wooden Horse, and likewise did well abroad.

In summer 1956, Eric and Sybil travelled by customised Land Rover through Bulgaria and Romania, where they met a wanted man who, carrying vital information, asked them to smuggle him across the Turkish border. Back in England, Williams wrote a novel extrapolating these experiences, constructing a thrilling climactic chase through the mountains. It was published as Dragoman Pass by Collins in 1959 to enthusiastic reviews.

The book went through at least five British impressions within the year, and two subsequent paperback editions – Pan in 1961 (retitled Dragoman to a Traitor) and the New English Library in 1970 – with two foreign-language translations in between.

Williams' second adventure novel, The Borders of Barbarism, was published by William Heinemann in 1961. Also inspired by his travels with Sibyl through the Balkans, this had their alter egos embroiled in a conspiracy involving theft, murder and blackmail. American and Canadian editions appeared in 1962, followed by two British paperback editions: Pan in 1963 and the New English Library in 1969.

In 1962, the couple bought a 24-tonne wooden sloop named Escaper and lived at sea in the Mediterranean until old age forced them to spend winters ashore. But Williams continued to write on the subject that had made him famous. In 1968, Collins published another anthology, More Escapers, which included fellow-Wooden Horse escaper Oliver Philpot's account of how he boarded a Swedish freighter in Danzig and made it to neutral territory. Fontana issued More Escapers in paperback in 1970 and 1972.

His final anthology, Great Air Battles, was his second for younger readers. Published by Collins in 1970, it went into paperback the next year – when Pan issued it in its Piccolo True Adventures series – and into a library edition in 1974.

Williams rarely sought publicity, so it was a moment to savour when the Observer magazine of 20 October 1974 launched a three-week series on wartime escapes with an interview entitled Wooden Horse That Turned to Gold – in which Williams promised to "begin writing again in the near future. I've got a lot to say and I think I have a couple more books in me."

He never did write them – but he used the article for his introduction to the revised edition of The Wooden Horse, which appeared in 1979. Although he kept the PoW aliases, he revealed the true names of the French and Danish helpers who made the last leg of his escape possible, added an account of what happened in the camp after the escape and dropped the fictional passages. The Wooden Horse again became a worldwide bestseller.

Eric Williams died aboard Escaper on 24 December 1983, but his classic books continue to thrill.

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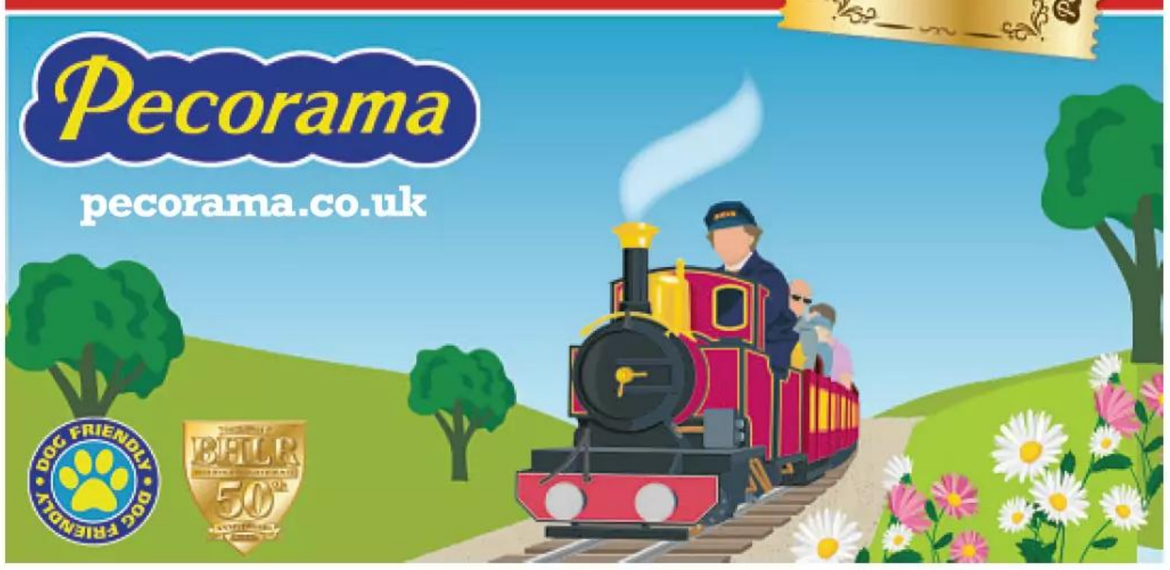

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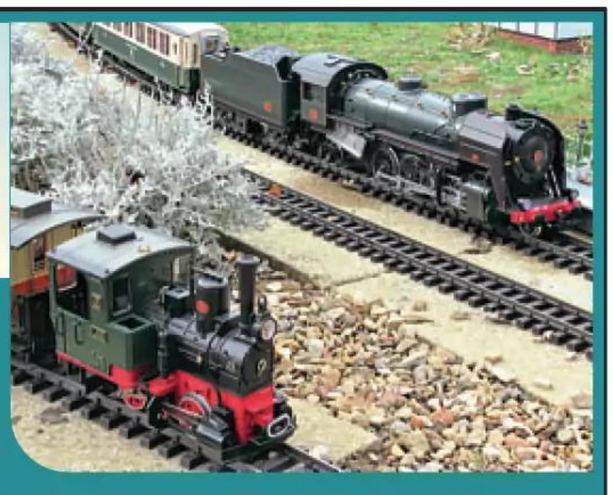

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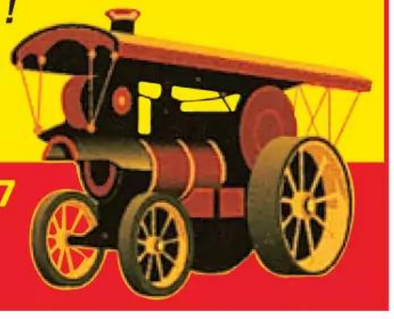

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Yesterday Remembered

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When the Heats Cools Off

Ken Duke of Harrogate, North Yorkshire remembers:

The year was 1978, two years after we got married. Having been no further north than Norfolk at that time, we both liked the idea of seeing the Highlands of Scotland. We searched through the brochures and plumped for two weeks in a self-catering bungalow a short drive from the so-called capital of the Highlands, Inverness.

We set off early in July in our trusty Ford Escort. Although nearly 10 years old, it was pretty reliable on long runs, although my fingers were crossed that we would not break down in some remote wasteland. We didn't. As the journey was almost 450 miles, we needed an overnight stop and found a house doing bed and breakfast in Jedburgh, just over the border. I recall a superb plate of creamy porridge being served up as part of the breakfast.

The next morning, we continued our journey. We naively thought that once in Scotland we'd nearly reached our destination. Wrong – Scottish road maps were scaled down due to the scarcity of populated areas and it took all day to reach our holiday address, including hours stuck behind caravans on roads where overtaking was impossible.

The bungalow was, to put it mildly, "rustic". It was on a remote hillside next to the elderly owner's house. The roof was of corrugated iron. Central heating and double glazing were conspicuous by their absence. At least it was reasonably clean with the basics in place. What was noticeable was the temperature was much lower than expected; even for Scotland this was a very cool July. Luckily, our hosts had anticipated this and there was a great heap of woollen blankets in the bungalow. Most were put into use when we made the bed up.

Despite it being nearly 10-years-old, Ken's trusty Ford Escort was reliable on long runs such as the 450-mile Highland trip.

We began our sightseeing with a ride around Loch Ness, which was not far away. As with all distances in the Highlands, this was a long drive. We hoped to find somewhere serving a Sunday roast, but at that time tourists were not catered for in this way. We eventually gave up and, parking by the roadside, lit our trusty primus stove used for afternoon cuppas and heated a quiche and a can of baked beans we'd brought with us for such emergencies. This lack of proper cooked meals was something we found throughout our stay.

Nevertheless, we enjoyed trips to numerous parts of the Highlands, each seemingly more spectacular than the last. The scenery was quite breathtaking, particularly Glen Affric along which we walked for several miles. If only the sun had come with us. At least the rain kept off, which for Scotland is a good result. In one remote glen, we saw a stag, which I stalked for a few minutes with my other half panicking in case it decided to charge. She was thrilled to find various unusual wildflowers, a subject close to her heart.

One day, we drove across the whole of Scotland to visit the Isle of Skye. The Skye Bridge did not exist then, and the Kyle of Lochalsh car ferry was the only way across. It was very romantic, and we couldn't help humming the Skye Boat Song as we crossed. We drove to Portree, the main town, where again no cooked meals were to be found apart from a mobile fish and chip van of which we took advantage. Afterwards, we drove south to the coastal village of Ord where we enjoyed a spectacular view of the distant jagged peaks of the Cuillin Hills mountain range.

We continued our exploration of the Highlands over the rest of our holiday. Inverness was a fine city, and we found a shop full of scarves and ties in scores of different tartans, providing us with perfect gifts to take home to our families. I drew the line at buying a haggis, although recently I finally tried one and enjoyed it. As for a kilt, definitely a no-no; with my legs I'd shock too many people.

Old Memories in New Brighton

Bob Cooper of Macclesfield, Cheshire remembers:

As a child living in the grimy streets of Everton, Liverpool during the 1950s, my two brothers and I looked forward to going "over the water" to New Brighton. This holiday resort was on the River Mersey, so we usually caught the tram on Heyworth Street to the Pier Head, carrying our buckets and spades. My parents, of course, prepared a pile of sandwiches, cakes and filled a flask with tea. It was exciting leaving our Coronation Street-type house for the day to make sandcastles and paddle in the sea. From the Pier Head, we boarded the ferry, and 20 minutes later, we were on our sandy beach. We never actually swam there as the river then was the colour of milky coffee and not very inviting.

Nearby was a fairground so we enjoyed going on the dodgems and other attractions when we could afford it and inevitably eating ice-creams and candy floss. We did this for several years until our family moved to Prenton, Birkenhead. By then, I was in my teens and New Brighton took on a different slant.

On the seafront there was the bathing pool which I visited on fine days. They also held bathing beauty competitions for Miss New Brighton, as well as sports events. One of my friends worked in the fairground, so I managed to sneak a few free rides. In the centre was the Tower Ballroom which lost its tower soon after World War One and was eventually sold as scrap metal.

When I reached my late teens, my focus eventually went on frequenting the different pubs and several clubs such as the Witches Cauldron, the Tivoli Theatre and the Grand Hotel, none of which survive now. Near the promenade was the Floral Pavilion Theatre, which usually had top names appearing, so I sometimes went there.

When Judith Durham, from the Seekers, went solo, she performed there, and I was able to meet her backstage. In the 1960s, many of the Merseybeat groups played there, such as Gerry and the Pacemakers, after they caught the Ferry Cross the Mersey. A while later, Shakin' Stevens topped the bill in his early days, but I was unable to meet him as he was mobbed by the mostly female audience.

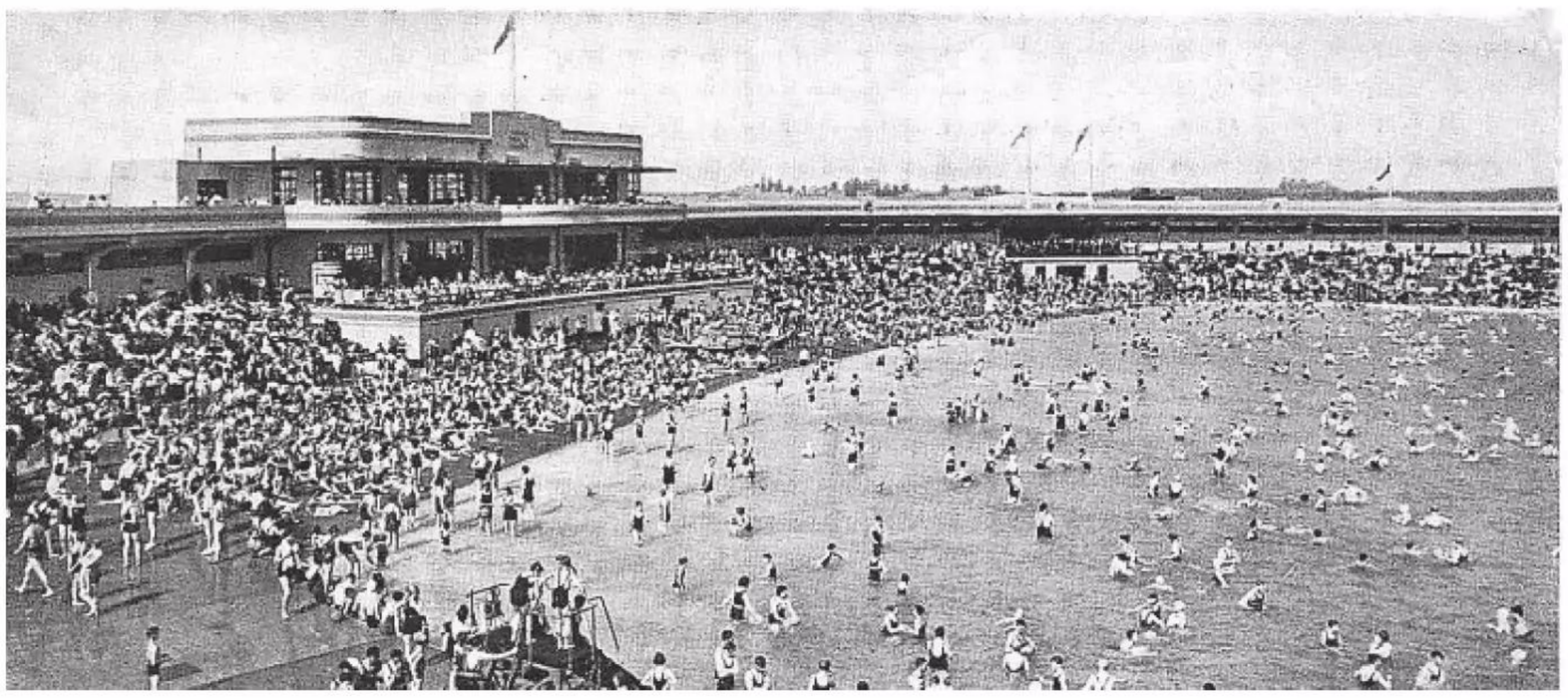
The Tower Ballroom became a very important venue on Merseyside and featured many famous British acts and touring Americans. Sometimes, they would appear at the Cavern at lunchtime, then go over to New Brighton in the evening. One such artist was Bruce Channel of Hey! Baby fame. I saw him in both places that day but one young starstruck female fainted in front of him. Luckily, I caught her before her head hit the floor.

On the same bill another night, I watched the Beatles as the support act to Little Richard. What a dynamic singer he was. The Beatles, of course, appeared there many times particularly after returning from Hamburg in their formative years. The Rolling Stones also performed a gig there, too, straight after appearing at Liverpool's Odeon Cinema, along with Dusty Springfield, the Everly Brothers, Duane Eddy, and Bo Diddley. What a lineup that was which cost me less than £1.

My most memorable time at the tower was for all the wrong reasons. On New Year's Eve 1966, I went to a Walker Brothers concert there, which I have to say was sensational. The downside to this was I had bought new shoes and, by the end of the evening, they had chafed my heels so badly they started bleeding. We were unable to book a taxi because of it being the busiest time of year. My friends and I had to walk nearly four miles back home, which I was forced to do in stockinged feet. The roads and pavements had iced over so you can imagine the discomfort. On reaching home, my feet were totally numb, and I ended up with chilblains. It was impossible to return to work for a few days until I recovered from a heavy cold and learning to walk again.

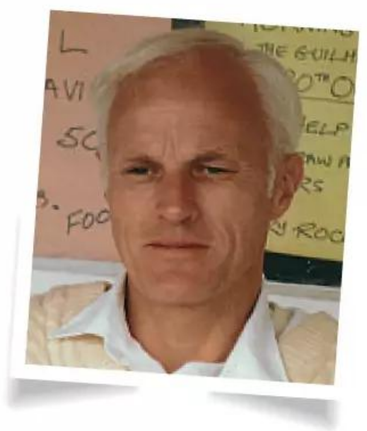
The Tower Ballroom first opened in 1898 and was the largest theatre outside London. Standing on the top, you could see the Isle of Man on a clear day. In 1958, the theatre was destroyed by fire but was renovated to reopen two years later. History repeated itself as there was another fire in 1968 which closed the venue for good until a housing estate was built on the site.

What a sad end to such an historical site, a place containing a large bank of memories for me and everyone else around those years. I was so pleased to be a part of it.



Left: Many famous acts would appear at the Cavern at lunchtime, then go over to New Brighton in the evening. Right: With the water the colour of milky coffee, Bob would avoid swimming in the Mersey but, on fine days, would visit the bathing pool on New Brighton seafront.

Fostering the Fossils



John Reynolds of St John's, Worcester remembers:

It all started in the winter of 1994/5 when I attended the Malvern Wells Cricket Club dinner. I overheard a distant relative of mine, who was then in his 60s, talking about how league cricket had stopped older players from playing because the general feeling was "win at all costs". I asked him why he didn't start an over-50s team, then he could still play friendly matches. I didn't give it another thought until just before I left for home, two chaps came up to me and said they would play when I started an over-50s side.

I said I just thought it would be a good idea – not that I'd start it myself. The very next day, Les White, who had also been at the dinner, rang and said he would also play. A few days later, while walking up the Shambles in Worcester, another chap asked when I was going to start an over-50s team and I gave him the same answer. But, by this time, the seed was sown.

So, one morning, I told my wife, Margaret, I was going to form an older blokes' team, but I couldn't think what to call it. Margaret's response was that because we were a lot of old fossils, why not call it the Fossils? The Fossils was born. My initial objective was to play one or two games a year, but this soon became six in the first year and rose to 50. We also had some excellent tours.

For almost 20 years, I did all the admin work, from finding grounds and players, selecting teams, arranging tours and helping Margaret organise teas. All this as well as being captain of the team, finding teams to play against, buying kit and scorebooks. One year in the days before text messaging, I made more than a thousand telephone calls.

In time, we became a very good side, often scoring more than 200 runs and one of our stars, John Shepherd, scored 1,000 runs three years running. He also scored seven centuries for the Fossils. I did so much for the team that one player called me a dictator, which I probably was at the time. I was also simultaneously running my own business, Willow Print, but it was always Fossils before business in my mind. However, in 2019, I had a quadruple heart bypass, so I decided to garner some help just in case I had to give up altogether. Brian Norfolk, Paul Thompson, Derek Ebbage and Martin Woodward took a lot of the load off my shoulders, arranging midweek fixtures, selecting teams and taking on all the other administration work.

The first game the Fossils played was at my old club, Rushwick, on 15 June 1995. Roy Booth, the ex-Worcestershire wicketkeeper, was president and he put a side out to play us. We batted first and made 160 for eight. Geoff White scored 47, I made 39 and Len Walker 31. Dave Adams took five for 26 for the President's XI. When they batted, the President's XI recovered from 99 for five to 172 for five, winning by five wickets, mainly thanks to an amazing century from their opener, Neil Homer. It was a great game and after that everyone wanted more games to be arranged – so I arranged them.

John received his first proper cricket bat as an 11th birthday present.

Other notable players for the Fossils included Colin Groves, Bob Rogers and Geoff White, who scored the first century in 1996. Dick Champion was the first bowler to take five wickets for us in 1995 and Martin Mudway's eight for 41 in 1999 is the most wickets taken in a match so far.

I've been honoured to receive two awards – one from the MCC for services to cricket and an Osca (Outstanding Service to Cricket Award) from Worcester Cricket Board, again for services to cricket since 1957. In 2012, Peter Jewell invited me to play for his Old England Invitation XI against an Australian Senior XI. The game took place on the Worcestershire County Cricket Club ground. Our side was a mixture of old county cricketers, including Wayne Larkins, Roger Tolchard, and Neil Radford, and local amateurs. I was invited to open the bowling for the England XI, and it was an excellent day. What's more, we beat the Australians.

Peter Tudge was our vice-captain for 20 years and many fine local cricketers have played and enjoyed the Fossils since 1995. During the 2015 season, a record 59 different players turned out. I never thought that at the age of 83 I would still be playing cricket and I'm very proud I started the Fossils Cricket Club as without them I doubt I'd have been playing in 2024.

Finally, I must thank Margaret for supporting me over 60 years at whatever team I have played for. Without her, none of it would have been possible.

The Fossils Cricket Club. Back row, left to right: Umpire (unknown), "Podge" Price, Barry Briscoe, Martin Woodward, Umpire Derek Russell (President), Bob Rogers, Colin Jones, Peter Tudge and Umpire Peter Stevens. Front row, left to right: Liz Dean, Bill Wood, Graham Thorne, John Reynolds, Ray Julian and Mike Gardener.

Making a Marc

David Rudman of Port Kennedy, Western Australia, Australia remembers:

I settled down on a December 1972 evening for what used to be essential viewing for anybody under the age of 30 – Top of the Pops. I wanted to see if my then favourite band, Lieutenant Pigeon, had made the charts. Up popped a band I'd never seen before, T Rex, with a curly haired singer by the name of Marc Bolan delivering a little belter entitled Solid Gold Easy Action. I'd forgotten about Pigeon within seconds.

I don't know if it was the catchy "Hey! Hey! Hey!" that grabbed me (which I remember my schoolmates aping the next day), or the glitzy stage presence, but this band boasted a fusion of 1950s rock'n'roll, 60s mysticism and 70s glam. Even John Lennon and Paul McCartney liked them. Lennon was reputed to have said that: "Marc Bolan was the only one who can succeed the Beatles."

Rewind to the early 1960s, Mark Feld started out playing tea-chest bass with Helen Shapiro in a group called Susie and the Hoola Hoops, before earning cash as a model and washing up in a Wimpy bar. He then went on to make some demos, including the Cliff Richard-influenced tune All at Once, and Dion's The Road I'm On (Gloria) before signing with Decca in 1965. A debut 45, The Wizard, was released, which didn't have much of an impact on the charts, but it was in 1967 that Marc hooked up with an outfit called John's Children. The band recorded Marc's A Midsummer Night's Scene and Desdemona as singles, but the "lift up your skirts and fly" lyrics of the latter was too much for the BBC, who promptly banned it.

The stay with John's Children was brief and Marc formed a new band, Tyrannosaurus Rex, consisting of two members, the other being Steve "Peregrin" Took on bongos, Pixiphone, African talking drums and various other percussion instruments and added backing vocals, when required. The duo had a minor hit with Debora and success in the album charts in 1968 with My People Were Fair and Had Sky in Their Hair.

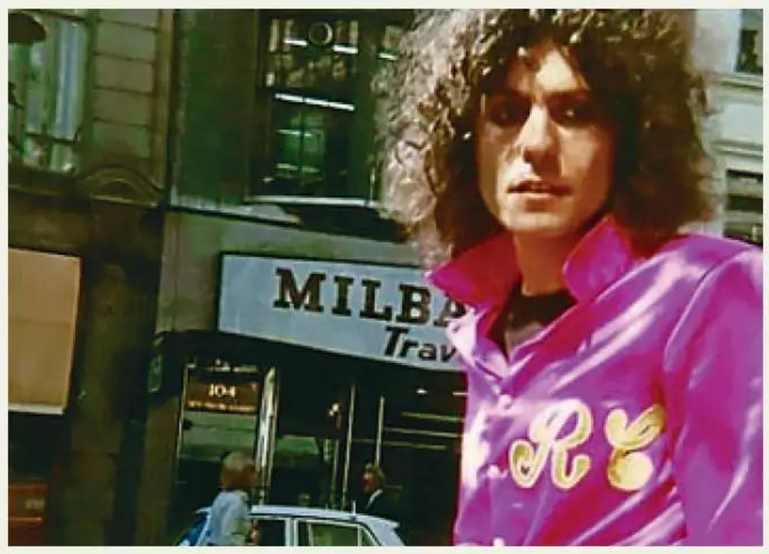
Tyrannosaurus Rex eventually evolved into T Rex and, after the departure of Took, became a four piece, with Mickey Finn on bongos and congas, Steve Currie on bass guitar, and Bill Legend on drums. The hits started in 1970 with Ride a White Swan and continued in 1971 with Hot Love, Get it On, Jeepster, and the album Electric Warrior, which sold half a million copies in the US alone.

In 1972, further hits followed with Telegram Sam, Metal Guru, Children of the Revolution, and Solid Gold Easy Action. The years 1973 and 74 saw the band having less chart success. Truck On (Tyke) was a good song, but didn't do the business in the same way as 20th Century Boy or the Groover and only reached No 12. T Rex's previous 45s rarely missed the top three. I still bought the 50p singles and £2.40 LPs, usually from The Disc Jockey in Hastings, East Sussex.

After measuring the grooves on the vinyl to estimate the length of the tracks, Shaun, my classmate, glanced at the yellow inner sleeve of the newly released Zinc Alloy and the Hidden Riders of Tomorrow album and exclaimed: "The lyrics don't make sense." In hindsight, I'm inclined to agree. This from Children of the Revolution: "I drive a Rolls-Royce, 'Cos it's good for my voice." Bob Dylan was the only wordsmith who attempted it previously, but his words had a semblance of meaning and Marc unashamedly confirmed it all later by saying he'd sung some nonsense in his time.

After an unhappy period for Marc, in which he put on a few pounds and the press made the obligatory "glittering chipolata" jokes, the summer of 1975 saw him slim down and put the band on the road with some small ballroom venues and a spirited return to the Top 20 with the New York City single, about a frog, a woman and an American city. It's a long way from New York to Hastings, but the Hastings & St Leonards Observer made a modest announcement about the upcoming event – T Rex were coming to town.

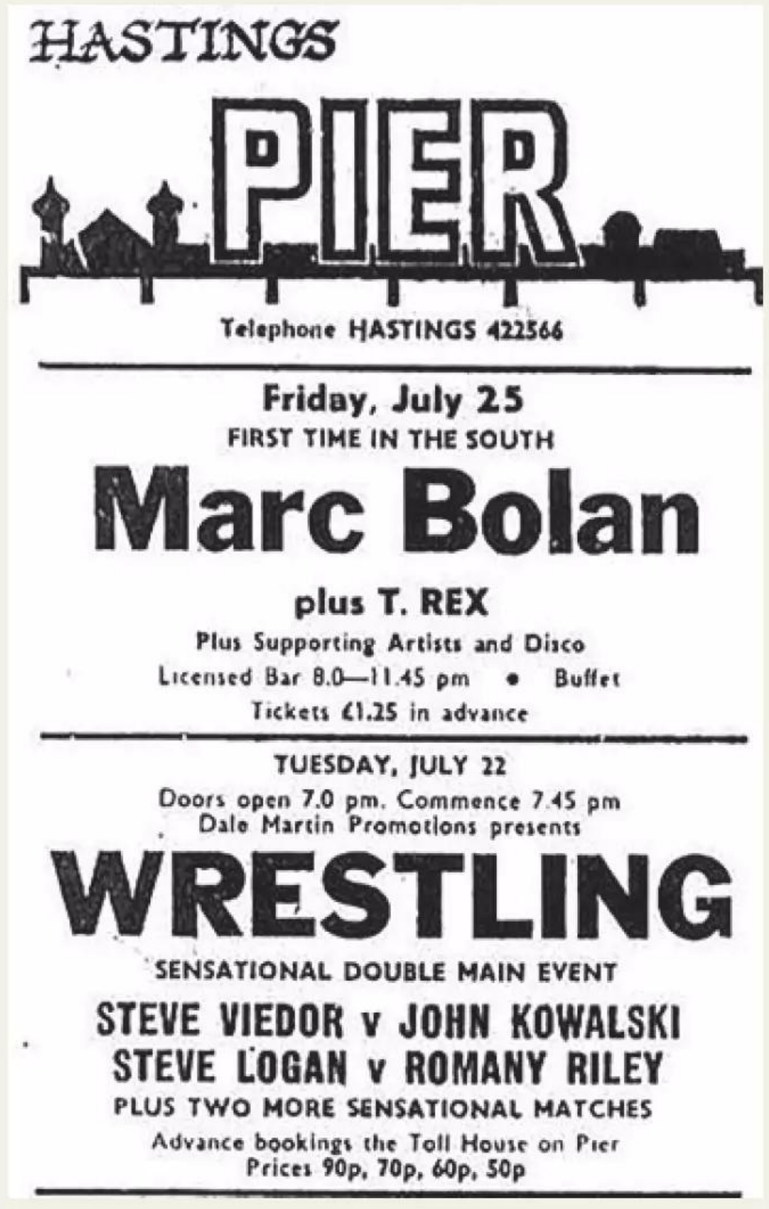
I only remember fragments of the concert, the extended Get it On, girlfriend Gloria Jones on keyboards, Marc doing his Bolan Boogie, and I'd thought he'd gone nuts at the time with the Jimi Hendrix-style whipping of a guitar or drum. I do recall the flying fists and smashing



of seats at the very end of the gig, which prompted my friends (Mark and Nick) and me to make a hasty exit.

Fifty years since this concert and I've never seen a performance so exhilarating and memorable and other fans agree – Joe Addick cherishes a towel thrown at him by Marc, and Kathleen Heron Andryszewski, who met him, tells me what a "sweet" guy he was.

Looking back at T Rex concert footage now, it's hardly surprising they had this effect on us. They were a fabulous band. Up there with the greats – Elvis Presley, the Beatles, the Beach Boys. Yes, they were that special.

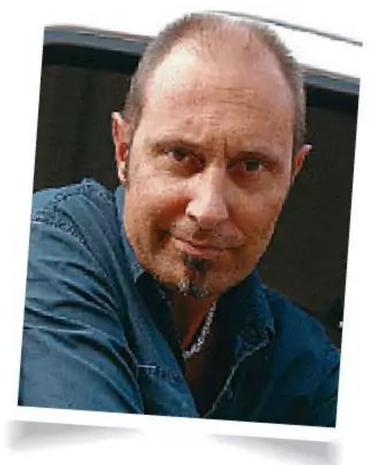


T Rex fan David in his younger days.

Top: Kathleen Heron Andryszewski, who took this photograph of Marc Bolan, found the T Rex singer to be a "sweet guy". Above: David saw T Rex in concert 50 years ago this month.

Two-wheeled Tearaways

Trevor Gehlcken of Totnes, Devon remembers:



My mates and I were all motorcycle mad in our teens. In the years running up to our 16th birthdays, we dreamed about and discussed ad nauseam what we would ride come the glorious day – and all of us managed to strut our stuff on some kind of contraption when we finally hit that magic age.

Looking back, I can't believe how far our money stretched. I had a Saturday job working on the market which paid the princely sum of £1 a week but, somehow, I managed to buy cigarettes and beer, take girlfriends out and still have spare change to purchase an old Lambretta LD150 from my next-door neighbour (£5) and tax and insure it so I was road legal.

I didn't really want a scooter as my mates and I were all sort of greasers, but I made do with it until I could trade up to a James 150 Pilot, which was a single-cylinder, two-stroke bimbler that was even slower than the Lambretta. But at least it was a motorcycle. I say "sort of greasers" because we were all grammar school lads and the real greasers in town, who roared about on Tritons, 650 Beezers and Ariel Square Fours, held us in complete contempt and ignored us. I suppose we should have been grateful – they could have beaten us all to a pulp for daring to imitate them.

Of course, I had to pull bits off my Lambretta and replace them with snazzier items, as you did back then. The old fuddy-duddy double saddles were replaced with a single modern one, mirrors were added, and I painted a pair of "go-faster" stripes down the side panels. You can judge how proud I felt from the accompanying photo.

I soon learned Lambrettas didn't corner very well when I took my mate Ian for a spin illegally before I'd passed my test. Taking a bend at the end of our street too fast, I hit the kerb and while Ian and the bike went flying in one direction, I ended up in the front garden of No 2. I remember the lady of the house rushing out and, looking down at me, she yipped: "Ooh, it's Mrs Gehlcken's son! Are you all right?" I bear a scar on my ankle from that escapade to this very day.

Little did we know it back then in the 1960s, but the British motorcycling world was on the cusp of its biggest change since the invention of the internal combustion engine. Up until then, just about everyone rode around on British-built bikes, unless they were rich, in which case Harley-Davidsons were the go-to option. Then, slowly but surely, Japanese models began appearing on our roads. Within 10 years, we were all riding Japanese bikes.

After we left school, my mate Barry got a well-paid job at a local garage and he pitched up one day on a brand-new 250cc Suzuki two-stroke twin, the first Japanese bike ever seen in our little market town. It looked a bit odd and seemed to be made of reinforced tinfoil, but it went like the clappers. Imagine the looks on the faces of the real bikers with their 650 Triumphs and Beezers when Bazza – still sporting his L-plates – blew them off the road and left them breathing his (considerable) exhaust fumes.

I later passed my bike test on a Honda CB175 – and what a joke that was. In those days, the examiner didn't ride behind the examinee but simply stood on one spot and watched the rider go round the block a few times. A mate of mine reckoned he fell off in a spot where the examiner couldn't see – and still passed his test. On my test day, it was chucking it down and after a few desultory laps of a block, we trudged back to the test centre where I was handed my golden ticket.

After progressing to bigger bikes, I soon realised that while Japanese engine technology had progressed to producing machines with staggering power outputs, frame technology had not yet caught up. Owning a Suzuki GT750, a two-stroke, triple-cylinder, water-cooled rocket ship, stratospheric acceleration could be accomplished in straight lines, while the taking of corners involved wrestling with the bike as its frame twisted and bucked. Many of these bikes and others like it ended up as mangled heaps and you'll rarely see preserved examples nowadays.

Before eventually owning my dream bike – a Harley-Davidson Sportster 1,200cc – I strayed briefly into the world of choppers. The 1969 Swedish-style chopped 650cc Triumph Bonneville looked a treat. But if handling on my old 750 Suzuki was bad, taking a corner on this beast proved almost suicidal so, not wishing to leave my two young children without a dad back then, I sold it soon after buying it.

Scores of bikes came and went over the years until now finally, at the age of 72, I find myself bikeless. If I do ever come into a bit of money, I'll be back on two wheels again. Now, much to the horror of my children and admiration of my grandchildren, my dream bike is either a Triton cafe racer or a Yamaha V-Max. At least the old adage "live fast, die young" won't apply to me.

Left: Scary times for Trevor with a 1969 Swedish-style chopped 650cc Triumph Bonneville. Right: Trevor imagining himself to be style icon aboard his first ever bike – a Lambretta LD150.

Camping or Glamping?

Joyce Johnson of Heswall, Wirral remembers:

A television advert by a budget-brand hotel chain outlining the trials and tribulations of camping awakened a childhood memory of a family holiday during the mid-1960s. Money in our household was always in short supply as my parents struggled to keep their heads above water with only one principal income providing for a family of four. With annual holidays low on a list of priorities, we were usually limited to a few days out using public transport to northern seaside resorts.

However, one summer, my dad's brother and his fiancee were offered the free use of a six-berth tent by a neighbour, so proposed we should join them on an inexpensive camping expedition. The neighbour had suggested a site they frequented in Flintshire, north Wales which today would take little more than an hour from our Liverpool home.

I was about seven and having been badly stung by a bee several years earlier, resulting in hospital treatment, was now terrified of any tiny creature that crawled, slithered or buzzed. The thought of sharing a living space with creepy-crawlies filled me with trepidation whereas my brother, five years my junior, was too young to know what was going on around him.

All four adults, in their 20s, had been brought up in the city with not one of them ever having any experience of camping. Off we went, six of us squashed up in my uncle's Ford Anglia van laden with bags of various paraphernalia squeezed beneath our legs and the tent strapped to the roof rack.

There was no such thing as satellite navigation, and I can't remember if we even had a basic road map but the journey along the winding Welsh roads took a lot longer than anticipated. I was complaining of feeling quite nauseous. I was relieved when we arrived at our destination, yet my heart suddenly sank when we saw the campsite was literally nothing more than a muddy patch of a farmer's field surrounded by woodland. There was no toilet block, no play area and no farm shop to buy provisions...

only a few two-berth trailer caravans and a couple of one-person ridge tents.

In those days, camping equipment was far different to what it is today. Frame tents were big and bulky, and my uncle soon discovered the tent he had borrowed was already "out of the ark" and proved extremely difficult (especially for novices) to pitch. The heavy canvas canopy needed to be fitted over a metal framework and secured into the ground by putting tension on the rope guy lines, so that the chunky wooden pegs could be hammered into the earth. Sounded simple enough – but who had thought of bringing a mallet?

Our single-burner Primus stove took so long to cook a pan of six sausages for breakfast that it was almost lunchtime before they were ready to eat. We even had to wait for them to finish cooking before we could boil an aluminium kettle of water to make a pot of tea. In the end, we just gave up and resorted to cornflakes and milk for breakfast followed by jam sandwiches instead of warm buttered toast.

Apart from a cold-water standpipe at the end of the field, there was nowhere we could get washed and the fact there were no lavatories was disastrous. I strongly refused to "go behind a bush", so someone in a nearby caravan offered the use of their primitive toilet. However, it turned out to be a disused oil drum screened from view with scraps of wood – so I wouldn't avail myself of that either. My uncle ended up driving everyone to the local village each day to use the public conveniences.

As city folk, the only sounds of animals we were used to at night was barking dogs, so the cacophony of countryside nocturnal noises was unnerving. I was perturbed by screeching and hooting owls and the blood-curdling screams of chattering foxes disturbed my sleep. The camping field lacked any form of outdoor lighting, so only by the pale light of the moon could I spot the fast-flying bats whooshing overhead. Then there were snuffling and rustling sounds among the undergrowth which could have been hedgehogs or rodents.

On our final day, we all set out on a country walk but, unfamiliar with the territory, it was inevitable we should find ourselves totally lost. My dad had suggested we take a short cut across a field full of cows, which we reluctantly did. But by this time, my brother was whinging that he was tired while I was protesting loudly about cow dung on my shoes and the adults were in heated debate about which route would be the best to take.

Obviously, the racket we were making was a strange phenomenon to the cattle. Gradually they started to group together, then follow us, picking up their pace as they did so. As they drew closer, my dad quickly grabbed my brother into his arms and started running towards the stone wall. "They're not cows," he shouted.

We all started running – but in hindsight, that was the most foolish plan of action as we had a potential stampede on our hands. It was only sheer adrenaline that enabled us to reach the end of the field and scramble over to the other side of the wall ahead of the young bullocks. The situation was so tense it gave the adults an insane urge to laugh. My brother and I were crying our eyes out.

That holiday left a lasting impression on me. While some people may relish the notion of lots of fresh air, sleeping under the stars, long rambling walks and chilling around a campfire, others (like me), would prefer more homely surroundings.

Joyce and her brother at a castle while on holiday in north Wales.

The Sporting Life

Sports memories from The Francis Frith Collection

Crookes Valley Park, Sheffield, South Yorkshire

(Photograph taken around 1955)

This photograph brought instant memories of when, as a teenager, I regularly walked with friends, Barry, George, Eric, and others, from Portland Street (near the Royal Infirmary) to Crookes Valley Park. There we hired racquets and balls for an hour and played tennis on the court to the right of the bowling green shown in the photograph.We were "the Young Ones", full of energy and careering around the court, while the old guys played bowls close by, and the park keepers made sure we didn't get out of hand. Now I'm one of the old guys, but the memories come back afresh on seeing this photograph.

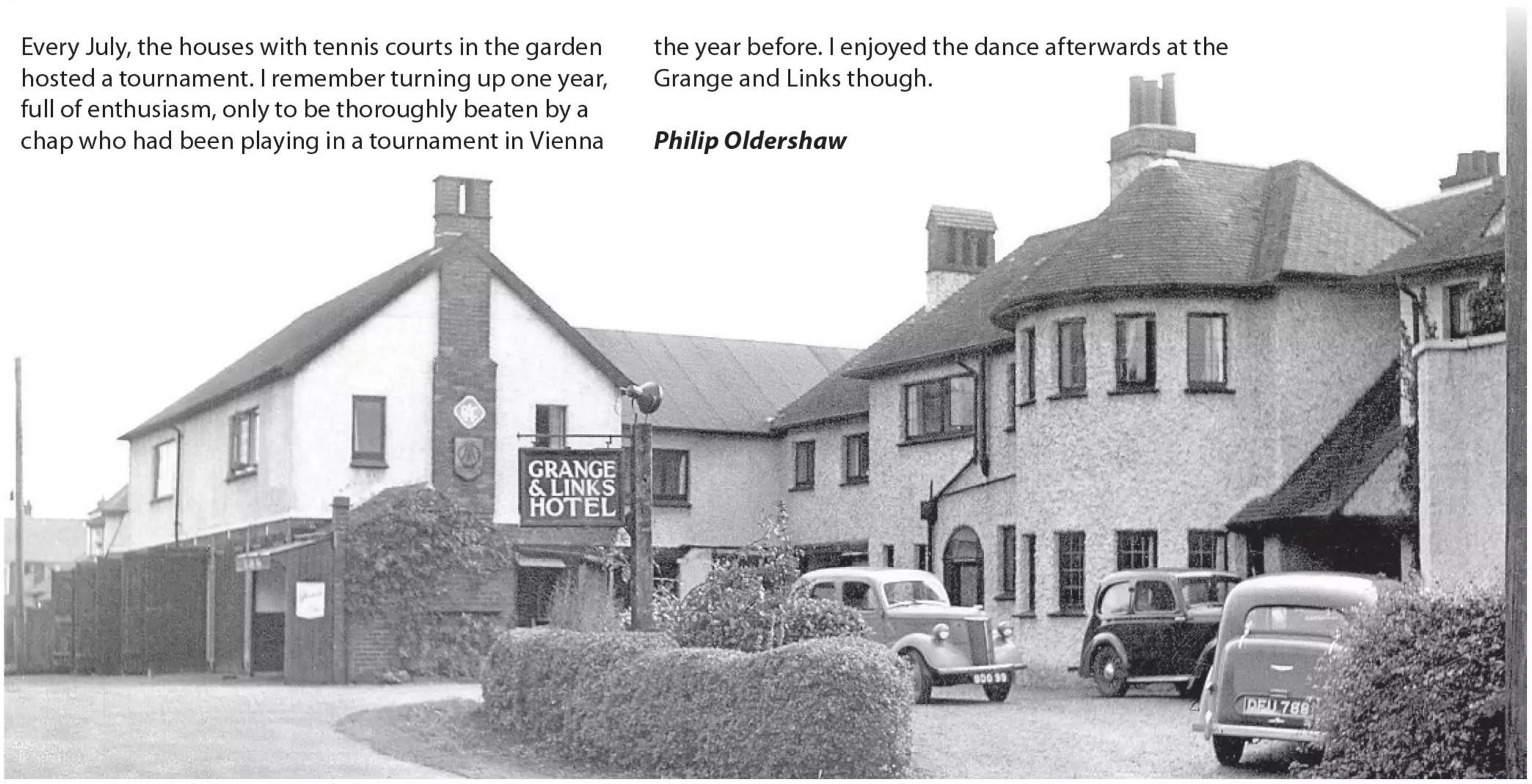
Derick Jordan

Grange and Links Hotel, Sandilands, Lincolnshire

(Photograph taken around 1955)

Every July, the houses with tennis courts in the garden hosted a tournament. I remember turning up one year, full of enthusiasm, only to be thoroughly beaten by a chap who had been playing in a tournament in Vienna the year before. I enjoyed the dance afterwards at the Grange and Links though.

Philip Oldershaw



The Common, Dinas Powis, South Glamorgan

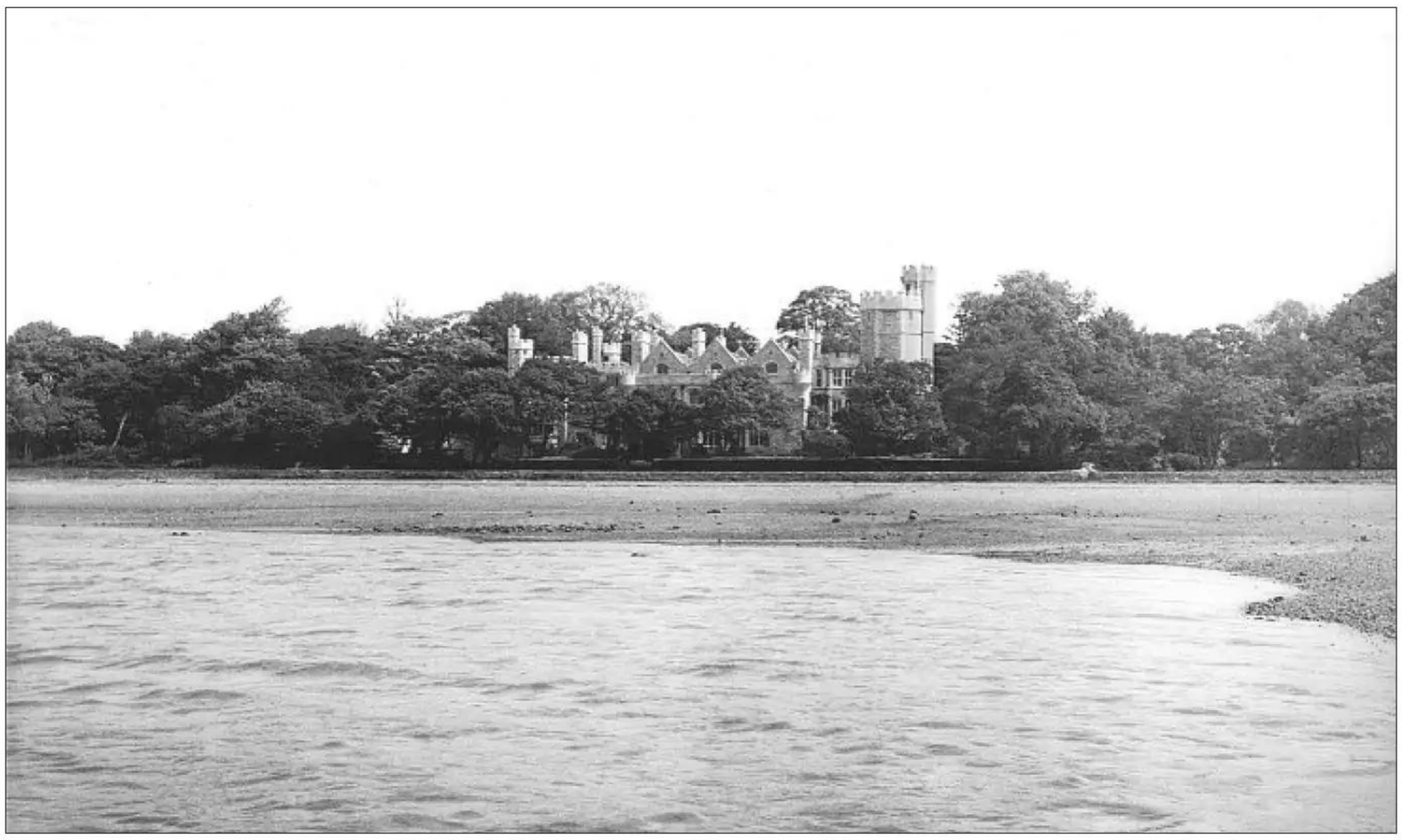
(Photograph taken around 1965)

Because I wanted to watch the 1966 World Cup Final on TV, I had not put my name down as being available to play cricket. However, the fixture had not been cancelled and, about half an hour before the football kicked off, the doorbell rang, and a lad asked if I would come down to The Common to make up the numbers. Some weeks beforehand, I had taken a medium fast ball full on the chest and, on the day in question, this had begun to hurt quite badly. After a few overs, my chest was really painful. I asked the captain if I could leave the field but he thought this was a ploy to get back home to see the World Cup. I managed to struggle to get to Betty Campbell's, the district nurse who lived just off The Common. She drove me down to the village surgery where one of the doctors lived over the shop. He refused to see me until half-time and then diagnosed that I had sprung a rib and strapped me up. Nurse Campbell then took me home, so I got to see the whole of extra time including the Geoff Hurst goal right at the end of the game.

Gerald Davies

The Castle, Netley, Hampshire

(Photograph taken around 1960)



I was born in Netley Abbey in 1962. My dad and uncle were joint managers of Netley FC who had their ground at the rec down by the waterfront. I was only 11 when my uncle died and 12 years old when my dad died so the memories I have are very few and far between. I do remember that when we had football matches, I used to run on the pitch at half time with the orange quarters and I used to stand there and cheer them on with my wooden rattle. At the end of matches, we usually congregated in the Red Lion public house along Victoria Road. My dad and uncle built changing rooms on the field, which had a tree growing in the middle of them. If I remember rightly, it was because they weren't allowed to cut the tree down.

Angela Chambers

The Francis Frith Collection

More than 150 years ago, pioneering Victorian photographer Francis Frith set up his company with the grand plan of photographing all the cities, towns and villages of Britain. His two sons, and later his grandson, continued Frith's massive task, and The Francis Frith Collection now contains more than 360,000 images taken between 1860 and 1970. Over 250,000 images are available to view online. Prints of the Frith photographs, as well as a wide range of other products and local history books, featuring these vintage images, are available from the website francisfrith.com

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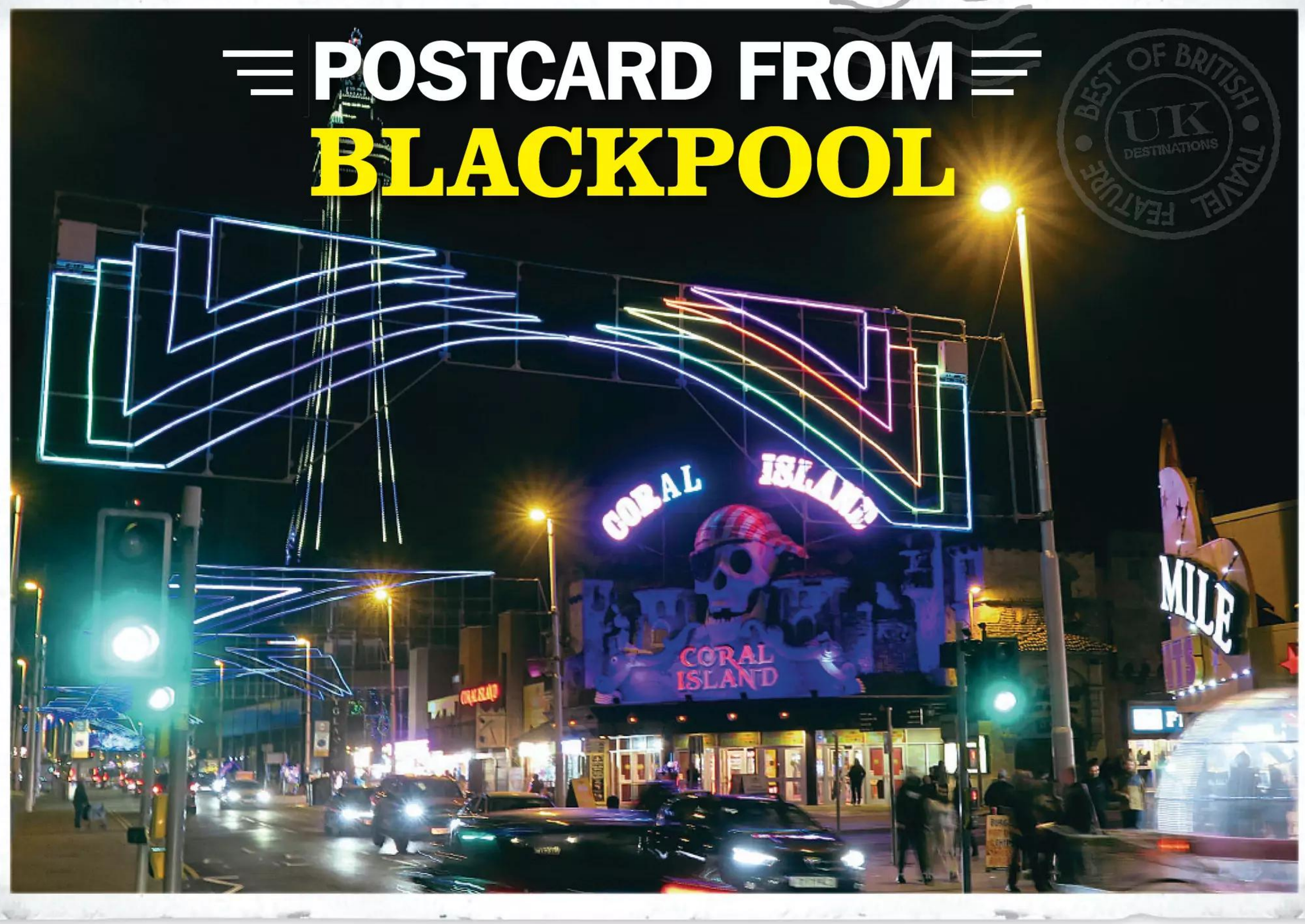


Bob Barton sees the light and discovers a place where the history, traditions and humour of the seaside are maintained in spades

Who doesn't love spending time at the seaside? Over the years, I've followed the Agatha Christie trail in Torquay, danced the night away in a Brighton discotheque, marvelled at a water-borne circus in Great Yarmouth, chosen a kiss-me-quick hat in Margate, and seen the settings for Bram Stoker's Dracula in Whitby. To name a few. One of the most popular and famous resorts is Blackpool. Yet I had never explored it: something I decided I needed to put right.

I hadn't been there five minutes before I fell in love with Tilly. She's one of the well-groomed donkeys who give rides on the sandy beach. The others included Coco, Max, Dolly and my namesake, Bobby. Tilly had a pink headband, a necklace of bells and seemed especially gentle. Unfortunately, I couldn't have a ride as adults aren't allowed. Her keeper explained that, since the 1940s, there's been a donkey charter that limits the animals' hours of work and gives them a day off every week. It also restricts rides to young people under 16. It was enjoyable spending time with these beautiful creatures.

I was late for an appointment at the Grand Theatre (01253 290111, blackpoolgrand.co.uk). Not for an audition but a backstage tour. It was led by an enthusiastic volunteer called Bez. She told me she had started in theatre at age 12 and had worked with a host of celebrities including Sir Ken Dodd. The late comedian has a statue upstairs, dedicated to "a Grand friend and incomparable master of mirth." We climbed on to the stage and explored the nooks and crannies of this ornate palace of entertainment. It was designed by master architect Frank Matcham and celebrated its centenary in 1994. Frank used steelwork to advantage, to create cantilevered balconies, while plasterwork

Top: The colourful illuminations date from 1912, originally being created for a visit by Princess Louise. They stretch over 10km with more than a million lamps. Left: Tilly is one of the donkeys who give rides on the sandy beach. She sported a pink headband, a necklace of bells and seemed especially gentle.

Photographs: Bob Barton

Left: Elaborate ceiling murals at the Grand Theatre. Right: Fleetwood is a smart town, with a park dominated by a statue of its founder, Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood. Bottom: The Tower Ballroom boasts glittering lights and tiers of seats like a giant wedding cake.

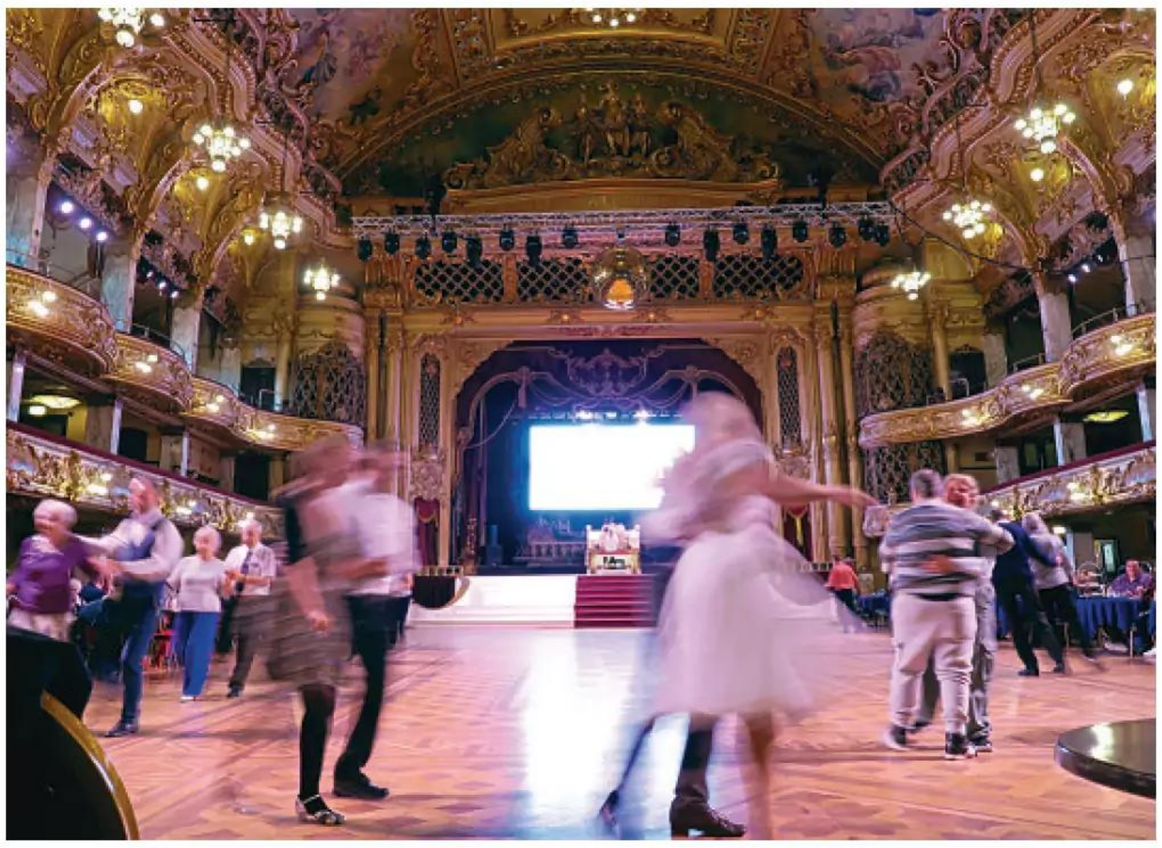
ornamentation was employed to produce a bright and breathtaking interior. The Grand became known as "Matcham's masterpiece".

I asked about ghosts and one of the volunteers mentioned an incident when a door in the gallery had opened of its own volition. Perhaps it was a woman but the volunteer didn't hang around to find out. Perhaps it was a famous actress who performed here, such as Ellen Terry or Lillie Langtry wafting past? Or male comedian WS Penley, who made a successful career playing Charley's Aunt.

One of the things I most wanted to do was ride a heritage tram along the seafront (blackpoolheritage.com). When towns and cities all over Britain abandoned their tram systems after World War Two, Blackpool was the one place that kept theirs running. Marking its 140th anniversary this year, the system has been fully modernised. It runs 11 miles along the coast, from Starr Gate to Fleetwood Ferry. Though new Bombardier trams represent the latest in this technology, I had an urge to ride something more nostalgic. I was able to get a ticket for a coastal tour that, as well as being scenic, was a form of transport that my grandparents would have known.

I was filled with anticipation as I boarded doubledecker English Electric Balloon tram Sir Ken Dodd, dating from 1934. Climbing to the top deck, I noticed it had "knifeboard" seats that could be turned to face in whichever direction the tram was going. They were well upholstered, and, with an array of windows, there were all-round views. We set off on time, the noise of whirring electric motors and the clattering track a contrast to the ride, as smooth as a flying carpet. Conductor Gordon explained people come from all over the country to ride these historical vehicles. "People remain nostalgic about trams, even though they stopped running in their hometowns more than 65 years ago," he said.

The journey became a guided tour, with Gordon pointing out the spot where, in 1989, Coronation Street's Alan Bradley was killed when he ran in front of a tram. "The episode was watched by 27 million viewers. Can you spot the blue plaque?" he asked. Less dramatically, we passed Bispham Tram Station, built in 1932 by Blackpool Corporation and notable as it combines classical and modern architecture. It once incorporated a ticket office and waiting rooms. These, I noticed, are now repurposed as a takeaway cafe.



We passed the factory that makes Fisherman's Friend lozenges (created by a local pharmacist in 1865). Then, it was exciting to trundle along the middle of Fleetwood's main shopping street. The locals barely gave us a second glance. We traversed a big loop to face the homeward direction, easing to a halt beside the ferry quay for a chance to stretch our legs. The town has not one but two lighthouses that work jointly to bring ships safely into port. It was a treat to be allowed to climb the narrow, winding steps of the Lower Lighthouse. The view from the top was of dunes where folk were flying kites. Brooding peaks of the Lake District beckoned across the bay.

Fleetwood is a smart town, with a park dominated by a statue of its founder, Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood. A local explained that, initially, the West Coast Main Line from London Euston terminated here in 1840. Passengers would board a ferry to continue their journey north towards Glasgow. "A clue is the name over there," he added. He pointed to the North Euston Hotel across the road.

Blackpool Tower (01253 375181, theblackpooltower.com) – inspired by the Eiffel Tower and dating from the 1890s – isn't one attraction but something akin to a vertical theme park. It contains an aquarium, circus, Madame Tussauds and the so-called Tower Eye at the top, to name a few. For me, the highlight is the Tower Ballroom. My partner's parents were keen ballroom dancers, and they spoke fondly about their dance club's outings to Blackpool in the 1980s. They said it's the country's best ballroom, speaking in reverential tones about its sprung dancefloor. Think gold leaf decoration, glittering lights, elaborate ceiling murals and tiers of seats like a giant wedding cake. Oh, and happy, twirling dancers. My visit, for afternoon tea, didn't disappoint but I was sad that I have two left feet.

Left: A colourful handbill for the Palace Variety Theatre from the 1950s, discovered in the Tower Ballroom ceiling when restoration works took place four years ago. Middle: Bob enjoyed sampling the resort's most famous ice-cream, Notarianni's, established in 1928.

In the lobby of the ballroom is a display of items discovered in the ceiling when restoration works took place four years ago. Among vintage newspapers, old matchboxes and Park Drive cigarette packets is a colourful handbill for the Palace Variety Theatre. It advertises a variety performance from the 1950s described modestly as "a magical, musical show of 1,000 miracles".

The icing on the cake for any visit to this resort are the colourful illuminations (this year, 29 August-5 January 2026). They date from 1912, originally being created for a visit by Princess Louise. Apart from breaks during both world wars, they have dazzled visitors every year, stretching over 10km with more than a million lamps, according to the official blurb. The various tableaux and strings by lights started to come on at dusk, coinciding with an orange sunset over the sea. Then a full moon added extra impact to the displays. Traffic slowed down to best appreciate the spectacle, though I enjoyed another tram ride to see them. Then a stroll past the tower, as it changed colour like a kaleidoscope, before I enjoyed a fish and chip supper on the prom.

I think the masterpieces of the light show are the illuminated trams. They are mobile works of art, some of them more than six decades old. I was elated to see the Western Train Tram on the move. This dates from 1962 and was inspired by a popular children's television show of the period: Casey Jones. It was one of my childhood favourites. It incorporates a tramcar from the 1920s, including a clerestory roof and open balconies, to resemble a passenger coach from the "wild west". The tram driver could be seen in the smokebox of the "steam engine".

Other top moments included sampling the resort's most famous ice-cream, Notarianni's (here since 1928; any flavour you like as long as it's vanilla) and spotting a statue of Morecambe and Wise in the elegant, glass-domed Winter Gardens. I also strolled the North Pier, to be reacquainted with iconic glove-puppet, Sooty (the bear made his debut there in 1948). I found the history, traditions and humour of the British seaside are maintained here in spades. After missing it for too long, I've "seen the light" in Blackpool and will be back.

The illuminated Western Train Tram on the move. It dates from 1962 and was inspired by Casey Jones, a popular ABC Weekend TV children's show of the period.

REFRESHMENTS

Bispham Hotel, 64B Red Bank Road, Blackpool FY2 9HR (01253 351752)
Traditional pub with a bar counter shaped like a tramcar. Samuel Smith ales, no meals.

Cask & Tap, 82 Topping Street, Blackpool FY1 3AD (caskandtap.co.uk)
Micropub decorated with old electrical equipment. Local Camra Pub of the Year 2025, no meals.

The No 4, Layton Road, Blackpool FY3 8ER (01253 398949, no4blackpool.co.uk)
The town has a tradition of giving its pubs numbers. An attractive suburban hostelry with a wide food menu and Thwaites ales.

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Right, Charlie

David Hewitt looks back on the life of the Blackpool Tower Circus clown whose archive is a cornerstone of the town's new showbiz museum

It's a classic bit of television Charlie. He's trying to play a tune and although he's failing – badly – you just know he'd succeed if only he used a proper instrument and not the big white kitchen sink he is holding up to his lips. Children all around are shaking with laughter. And the adults are shaking, too. Making them do that was Charlie Cairoli's job, of course. And it was one he performed very well, most famously at Blackpool Tower Circus. Now, his clowning life is being celebrated in fine style in the town he made his home.

Charlie was born near Milan, in 1910, the son of parents from famous French circus families, and he began performing at the age of seven. Before long he was travelling all over Europe.

The first place he made an impression was the Cirque Medrano in Paris, which was known as the "Temple of Clowning". That was also where he made an impression on Violetta Fratellini, who was from a circus family herself, and who in 1934 became his wife.

Charlie also performed in Munich, at the Circus Krone, where Adolf Hitler was so impressed by his act that he gave him a gold watch. Normally a man of few words, on this subject Charlie was very frank. "Hitler nearly died laughing," he said, much later. "I wish he had. It would have saved a lot of people a great deal of heartbreak and sorrow."

It was in the summer before World War Two that Charlie made his debut at the tower. He would appear there every season for the next four decades, even going so far as to make Blackpool his home. And to the end of his days, he would speak with an accent that was a glorious mixture of France, Italy and north Lancashire.

He toured the country in revue and pantomime and appeared in films. And in 1955, he performed at the Royal Variety Performance in front of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. Held at Blackpool Opera House, this was the first one outside London. The other acts on the bill included George Formby, the Crazy Gang, and Morecambe and Wise.

Charlie had by now settled upon the image that would serve him well for the rest of his career, with the red cherry nose of the traditional Auguste clown, the drawn-on eyebrows and moustache, and the black lines around his eyes. He had honed his routine until it was a masterpiece of knockabout humour and split-second timing. That was thanks to Charlie's own genius, of course, but it also owed something to his wonderful sidekicks. "Paul" was a whiteface clown played over the years by three different men (all of whom were actually called Paul) while "Little Jimmy" Buchanan was a rubber-faced man of uncertain age who would invariably be wearing a kilt.

Many's the time Charlie would pretend to have got his finger stuck in Little Jimmy's ear, or up his nose. Or he

Above: Charlie Cairoli with the red cherry nose of the traditional Auguste clown, the drawn-on eyebrows and moustache, and the black lines around his eyes, with his sidekick, the whiteface clown Paul.

Photograph: (Showtime) visitblackpool.com

Above: The mementos of Charlie Cairoli's circus career have been acquired by Showtown, Blackpool's showbiz museum, which stands in the shadow of Blackpool Tower. Below: In 2002, the Royal Gibraltar Post Office issued a set of stamps celebrating famous clowns and featured (clockwise from top left) Grock, Charlie Cairoli, Coco the Clown and Joseph Grimaldi.

would try, but not quite manage, to set the dinner table. Or he would blow up a piano, only for Little Jimmy to come crawling out of the wreckage. He might even get a child out of the audience to join in the fun. The lucky boy or girl would soon be shaking with a mixture of delight and terror. And everyone would end up soaking wet and covered in custard pie.

As well as being a wonderful comic, Charlie was also an accomplished musician. He showed flashes of that in his act, albeit on proper instruments, such as the trombone, the tuba or the clarinet. And he, Paul and Little Jimmy would take part in the spectacular finale that brought each performance to an end and saw the ring fill with more than 40,000 gallons of water.

As his fame went on spreading, he appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show in the US and got asked back more than once. In Britain, he appeared with David Nixon, Mike and Bernie Winters, and Eamonn Andrews. And Eamonn would go on to surprise him with the big red book for an episode of This Is Your Life.

Charlie came to be acknowledged as a true circus great, appearing frequently in France, not only on the screen, but also at prestigious theatre festivals. When he appeared at a festival in Monte Carlo, it was Prince Rainier he made shake with laughter.

The television show with the children was Right Charlie, which went out on the BBC from 1972 to 1976. Recorded at the Octagon Theatre in Bolton, the show also featured Paul and Little Jimmy, together with ringmaster Norman Barrett and Charlie's own son, Charlie Junior. And it always started in the same way. "Right, children!" Charlie would say, and "Right, Charlie!" the children would reply. What followed was half an hour of

"Charlie had honed his routine until it was a masterpiece of knockabout humour and split-second timing."

barely controlled mayhem.

Set against that, Charlie's Blackpool home was an oasis of calm. He fell into a comfortable routine there, spending the day working on his routines and making props. And in the evening, after the last show of the day, Violetta would collect him from the tower and take him to a nearby bar, where the two of them would share a nightcap together.

Charlie's home was also a place of kindness, and people in Blackpool still talk about the charity events held in his garden, the splendid tips he gave to paperboys and "bob a job" Scouts, and the birthday parties he would turn up for at short notice, asking nothing by way of payment save a bowl of jelly and ice-cream.

However, clowning around was no laughing matter. It demanded concentration and great energy, and Charlie wasn't getting any younger. He left the circus ring in November 1979, on doctor's orders, intending to spend his retirement fishing and cooking. But he died only three months later in February 1980, aged 70.

Charlie's image appeared on a postage stamp and a Blackpool tram after that. A statue of him was put up in the tower itself. And now, the mementos of his circus career have been acquired by Showtown, the resort's all-singing, all-dancing showbiz museum, which stands in the tower's very shadow.

George Formby's ukelele and Stan Laurel's hat are already there, alongside Tommy Cooper's fez, the very first Sooty, Ken Dodd's shaggy red coat, and Bobby Ball's red braces. But Hitler's watch won't be joining them. It might not have been a watch at all, in truth, for even Charlie sometimes said it was a cigarette case, a cigarette lighter, or even a leather briefcase. He remained adamant, however, that whatever the item was, he hurled it into the Irish Sea in disgust on the day war broke out.

The mementos in the museum are impressive. They include Charlie's red noses and bowler hats, the spangly costume worn by one of the Pauls, and the cannon that was used to blow up that piano. And pride of place has been given to Charlie's instruments – the tuba and the clarinet, of course, but also the sink-trumpet, which might not have been very musical, but still managed to produce a good 40 years of laughs.

Showtown, Bank Hey Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 4TQ (0808 175 6929, showtownblackpool.co.uk)

The Lost Lionesses

Paul Rance looks back to the 1971 Women's World Cup and the former bus driver and Spanish civil war veteran who coached them

In the early 1970s, women's football in England was a far cry from what it is today. Today, England's Lionesses such as Beth Mead, Lucy Bronze and recently retired international goalkeeper Mary Earps are as well-known as their male contemporaries. However, more than 50 years ago, Harry Batt, a one-time bus driver from Luton and veteran of the Spanish civil war and World War Two, set out to push women's football forward.

In 1971, Luton boasted one of the strongest women's teams in England in Chiltern Valley Ladies. Luton Ladies was another excellent side, and the Bedfordshire town was really the epicentre of women's football in England in the early 1970s. Harry Batt was the manager of Chiltern Valley Ladies, which was trained by his wife, June. Harry, though, had national and international aspirations regarding spreading the growth of women's football. There was an unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico in the summer of 1971, and Harry set out to assemble a team called the British Independents for the tournament. It was, in effect, an unofficial England Ladies team, and in the programme for the tournament the team was called England.

This team would become known as "the Lost Lionesses", although "the Forgotten Lionesses" seemed more apposite for many years. The team of 1971 included players from Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Yorkshire, and Hampshire (Southampton Ladies was another notable team of the time). Captain Carol Wilson was from Newcastle upon Tyne.

The tournament in Mexico was to prove to be a tough challenge for Harry Batt's team. They not only lost all three games, but there were serious injuries to players, too. Carol Wilson even played on in one game with a broken bone in her foot. For a very young team, with 13-year-old Leah Caleb the youngest, playing in front of a crowd of around 90,000 in the Azteca Stadium against Mexico was an eye-opener. It was the same stadium that had seen the Brazilian team of 1970, arguably the greatest football team of all time, enchant the world with their stunning football in that year's World Cup final.

Though feted by Mexican fans, in the UK the 1971 Lionesses were pretty much unknown. Along with some of my school friends, I played football with one of the England Ladies XI, Chris Lockwood. She told us she played international football, but we had been unaware that there was an England Ladies football team, such was the scant publicity surrounding women's football at the time.

Women's football had been effectively banned in the UK for decades, and this was the case in many western countries. There had, though, been pioneers in the women's game in Britain more than a century ago. Nettie Honeyball was one notable example, and she was like the Harry Batt of her time. Nettie helped to organise a British Ladies side in the 1890s. Women's football started to grow in popularity during World War One, when professional men's football in England was suspended. Consequently, women's teams stepped in to fill the void.

Dick, Kerr Ladies FC, a works team from Preston, Lancashire would emerge

Above: Harry Batt and his British Independents arrive in Mexico for the 1971 Women's World Cup.

Photographs: (Lead) El Nacional, (Xóchitl) Creative Commons/Claus Pedraza, (Flags) El Heraldo de México

Left: England captain Carol Wilson exchanges flags with her Mexican counterpart prior to kick off. Right: Xóchitl was the mascot of the 1971 Women's World Cup.

as the first great English women's team. Their success, however, was short-lived as women's football was banned on FA-affiliated grounds shortly after the Great War in 1921. Games of women's football did continue, but attendances fell sharply – which seemed the ban's intention. This ban, remarkably, wouldn't be rescinded until 1971. That would be a significant year for Harry Batt also.

Though the restrictions on women's football had been lifted, a ban was looming for Harry Batt, wife June and Chiltern Valley Ladies. Today, Harry Batt is seen as a trailblazer for women's football in England, but in the early 1970s, his audacity was rewarded with a life ban by the English FA. The 1971 unofficial Women's World Cup was not Harry Batt's first international tournament. In 1969 and 1970, he had taken British Independents sides to unofficial tournaments. Firstly, in 1969, Batt's team played in a European Championship. The next year, Batt's side played at the Women's World Cup in Italy. Only seven teams entered, and England finished fourth. It was at these tournaments, with the name "England" being used that started the schism between Batt and the Women's Football Association (WFA), which Batt had been part of.

Just over a year later, six teams entered the unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico. The small number of participants for women's tournaments at this time was mostly down to many teams withdrawing. For Mexico in 1971, Harry Batt's team was at a major disadvantage because they would be up against opponents that were semi-professional.

> **"The tournament in Mexico was to prove to be a tough challenge for Harry Batt's team."**

On returning home, Harry and June Batt suffered blacklisting from the WFA. It's easy to think that the WFA's pride had been pricked, as they had been in the process of forming an official England women's team. Harry Batt's side had been very popular in Mexico and good ambassadors, but draconian punishments were still meted out. Chiltern Valley Ladies was told to disband. Batt's life ban by the FA meant he was no longer able to coach and manage teams. Harry was crushed by the harshness of his punishment and became disillusioned with football.

In 2023, a blue plaque was awarded to Harry and June, the 1971 Lionesses and their official name, the British Independents (the team played from 1967 until 1972). The plaque was unveiled at the home of Chiltern Valley Ladies at Crawley Green Recreation Ground in Luton. The achievements of these pioneers had finally and officially been recognised. Members of the 1971 team and Keith Batt, Harry and June's son, attended the blue plaque's unveiling, along with other members of Keith's family. Keith had been the 10-year-old mascot for the 71 team.

Momentum had been building for recognition for Harry Batt and his players in the years leading up to their blue plaque award. BBC commentator Jonathan Pearce mentioned the early Lionesses during a televised women's World Cup match in 2019. The 1971 team also appeared on BBC Television's The One Show during that 2019 World Cup. Current Lionesses expressed their gratitude to the 71 team and the other players before them who had kicked open the doors, including Lioness stalwarts Jill Scott and Lucy Bronze.

The triumphant European Championship campaign for the Lionesses of 2022 was a vindication of Harry Batt's vision. If that had been embraced in his time, one wonders how much more quickly the women's game in England and the UK would have grown. Today, Luton does have a women's team in the shape of Luton Town Ladies FC.

Last year was a big year of recognition for the 1971 tournament, with a film and a book being released. The book, The Lost Lionesses: The Incredible Story of England's Forgotten Trailblazers, by Gail Emms was released last September. Former badminton star and Olympic medallist Gail is the daughter of Janice Emms (née Barton), a member of the 1971 team.

The film, Copa '71: The Lost Lionesses, produced by tennis legends Serena and Venus Williams, was released in March 2024. Harry Batt is seen in the film giving encouragement to his Chiltern Valley Ladies team. Also, in the film, Trudy McCaffery, who played for Chiltern Valley Ladies and in the 71 tournament, summed Harry up: "He just had big plans for ladies' football in general. Harry didn't play by the FA rules."

A Military Film Star

The Longmoor Military Railway, the army's own standard-gauge railway was a familiar sight in films, writes **David Brown**

If you've seen the 1966 film The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (TGSTTR), you will already know something about the former Longmoor Military Railway (LMR), whether you realise it or not. While the LMR in Hampshire had been established for military purposes, the location became very useful to film-makers over the years.

Longmoor camp and ranges had been introduced before the Boer War, with a narrow-gauge line used for transporting construction materials. Before World War One, an assortment of narrow- and metre-gauge tracks was used to familiarise personnel with the different systems in use abroad, while a standard-gauge system was developed.

Originally, the facility was known as the Woolmer Instructional Military Railway, changing to The Longmoor Military Railway in 1935. A line opened between Bentley and Bordon in 1918, served by eight passenger trains on weekdays plus some Saturday services. The line between Longmoor and Liss followed in 1935. Through troop trains were run from London Waterloo to Bordon and Liss.

The first record of the system being used for filming purposes was a segment for a silent film, Mons, in 1926. Alfred Hitchcock used the location for scenes in The Secret Agent in 1936 and The Lady Vanishes in 1938. In 1937, Jacques Feyder's

Top: An expectant crowd waits to board a train to Bordon hauled by Hunslet Austerity saddle tank Errol Lonsdale at a Longmoor Military Railway open day in 1968. Left: Alfred Hitchcock used Longmoor Military Railway for scenes in The Secret Agent in 1936 and The Lady Vanishes in 1938.

Photographs: (Black Prince) Creative Commons/Alan Taylor, (Open day) Creative Commons/Alan Murray Rust

Left: While the stars of Bhowani Junction (1956) were Ava Gardner and Stewart Granger, supported by Bill Travers, sappers appeared as extras, including casualties of the crash. Right: BR Class 9F 2-10-0 No 92203 Black Prince at Longmoor Military Railway. Bottom: Longmoor Military Railway featured for the final 20 minutes in a hyperactive series of chases in The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (1966).

A Knight Without Armour, starring Robert Donat and Marlene Dietrich, included some scenes shot at the LMR.

The LMR was used as a location for training films, several of which have been released on video and DVD, while a 1961 Pathé News short, Army Railway, can be seen online at britishpathe.com/asset/37122

Scenes for The Interrupted Journey (1949) were filmed there, starring Richard Todd with Dora Bryan (who would feature in TGSTTR) as a buffet waitress, involving characters on an express train and the consequences involving the pulling of the communication cord.

The 1950s was a productive decade for filming on the LMR, starting in 1950 with Frank Launder's The Happiest Days of Your Life starring Alastair Sim and Margaret Rutherford, with a scene shot at Liss station including one of the LMR's Austerity 0-6-0STs.

Top Secret (1952) starred George Cole (another St Trinian's regular as Flash Harry) as a sanitation inspector mistaken for a Russian spy. Liss Forest Road station was used for a Russian night location with US-built S160 Class 2-8-0 locomotive No 700 Major General Carl R Gray Jnr. This was remarkably authentic as 110 of these locomotives were employed in Russia.

The LMR was given a challenging role in George Cukor's Bhowani Junction (1956), set in India during the last days of the British Raj. The largest film set built at the LMR was for the crash scene shot on the Hollywater Loop using some redundant coaches and a wooden locomotive replica. While the stars of the film were Ava Gardner and Stewart Granger, sappers appeared as extras, including casualties of the crash.

Scenes were also shot for another 1956 production, Jumping for Joy, starring Stanley Holloway as a sacked dog-track attendant living in an old railway carriage. It also featured Frankie Howerd, who would appear in TGSTTR a decade later.

The yard at Longmoor became a Chinese railway junction, Tientsin, for The Inn of the Sixth Happiness, Mark Robson's film starring Ingrid Bergman and Curd Jürgens (1958), in a scene that lasts less than a minute in the film. The first year of the next decade saw two films making the most of the locations at Longmoor: The Challenge, and Sons and Lovers.

The Challenge was an American film noir-style thriller made in England, featuring Anthony Quayle and Jayne Mansfield. A kidnapped boy is encouraged to play "chicken" on the railway line. At one point, Longmoor Downs station became the BR location Fourways with WD 2-10-0 No 601 Kitchener suitably disguised. Towards the climatic conclusion, there are some great action scenes featuring the LMR. An adaption of DH Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, directed by Jack Cardiff and featuring Trevor Howard, Dean Stockwell and Wendy Hiller, saw Longmoor Downs station become Bestwood.

A Weekend with Lulu in 1961, starring Leslie Phillips and Shirley Eaton, referred to a caravan that found itself on a train heading to France with the LMR being used for UK and French scenes.

In 1963, the LMR was used for a few sequences of the Children's Film Foundation's The Rescue Squad. When a group of children get a toy plane stuck in an old tower, they come up with various schemes to rescue it. Each time they get to a railway line with, for example a long ladder, a train suddenly appears.

The LMR's facilities, that resembled a full-size train set, provided a suitable location for the Children's Film Foundation's Runaway Railway (1965), including a scene where tank locomotive Matilda (a disguised Austerity 0-6-0ST No 196 Errol Lonsdale) is seen being closely followed by 2-10-0 No 600 Gordon around the Hollywater Loop. Four children know all there is to know about railways and are seen driving and restoring Matilda, plus foiling the plans of two mail train robbers played by Sydney Tafler and Ronnie Barker.

In 1966, another crash scene was filmed at the LMR for Bryan

Forbes' The Wrong Box, a dark comedy about two brothers trying to kill each other to gain the family fortune.

This brings us to TGSTTR, the fourth of the original St Trinian's series – and the first in colour – featuring the rebellious girls' school as originally depicted in Ronald Searle's cartoons. The 1966 film had a topical air to it, thanks to the opening scene of a mail train robbery with echoes of 1963's Great Train Robbery. The railway appears subsequently a couple of times but is then featured for the final 20 minutes in a hyperactive series of chases.

These scenes involved several trains operating just a few yards apart on the same stretch of line including one of the LMR's disguised Austerity tanks driven by the getaway gang with Frankie Howerd, followed by another LMR Austerity tank in BR guise driven by hockey-stick wielding schoolgirls, with a couple more schoolgirls whizzing along on a pump trolley.

Another memorable scene is when the headmistress and some of her staff appear on a motorised Wickham trolley with Dora Bryan shouting on the megaphone: "My name is Amber Spottiswood, headmistress of St Trinian's and I'd like to claim the reward regards the train robbery." Their trolley appears to heading straight into a freight train hauled by a LMR diesel shunter, before speeding up in reverse. To add even further variety, the police give chase in a Southern Region Diesel Electric Multiple Unit.

It's all great fun and came at a time when the future of the LMR was looking uncertain because of military cuts. In 1967, the LMR was used for scenes in Morecambe and Wise's The Magnificent Two, and then, the next year for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

By the time Richard Attenborough's Young Winston, featuring Simon Ward and Robert Shaw, came along in 1972, the LMR had closed and most of the military personnel had departed. A scene following Churchill's escape from prison uses a US tank from the Bluebell Railway and the much-disguised BR 9F 2-10-0 No 92203 Black Prince – a locomotive owned by artist and conservationist David Shepherd – really represents the end of a creative era. Shepherd was involved in a scheme to preserve part of the Longmoor system as a heritage centre that was thwarted by local opposition.

Be warned, looking for Longmoor locations on screen can become an obsession.

LIQUID GOLD

Roger West digs down into the history of drilling for oil in Derbyshire

In 1911 and with the storm clouds of war gathering over Europe, home secretary Winston Churchill was to become the First Lord of the Admiralty and minister for war and air, standing defiant at the very heart of international affairs. At the age of just 36, he was effectively in command of the Royal Navy and the British Grand Fleet. At this critical moment in world history, Churchill, against advice and opinion, made the colossal decision to change the fuel used in navy vessels from coal to oil; a brave yet much criticised move.

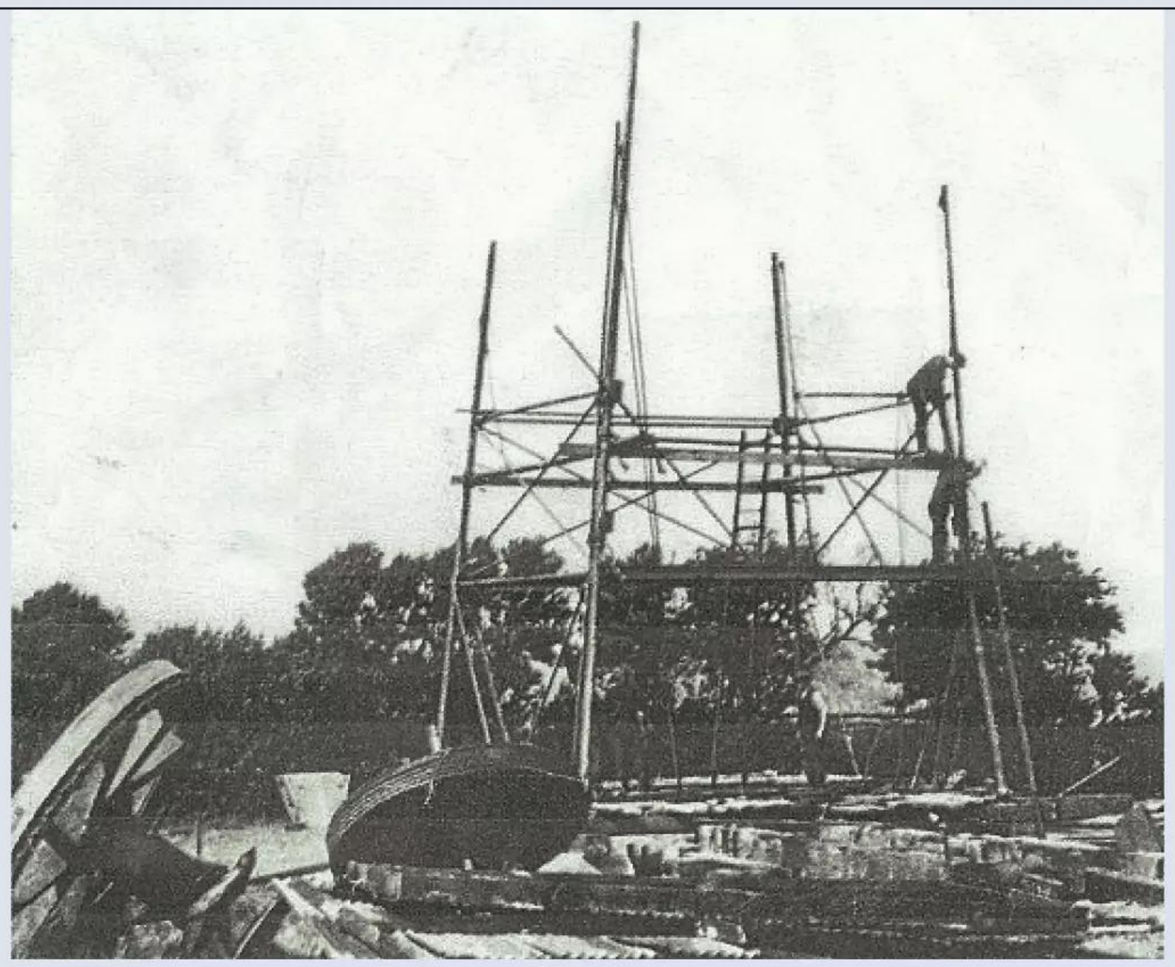
The UK had inexhaustible supplies of coal at this time but no indigenous source of oil, and in the opinion of many experts, there was little chance it ever would, leaving Britain relying entirely on imports of oil from the empire and far-flung corners of the globe. Never-the-less, oil power proved to give its fleet greater efficiency, cleanliness and reportedly assisted the shortage of manpower by reducing the need for coal stokers.

After war was declared, it didn't take too long for imported oil supplies to become a main target of German U-boats. By the start of 1915, German submarines constantly attacked, torpedoed and sank many tankers bringing in essential oil supplies to UK ports. With the threat escalating, the panic-stricken government finally realised the scale of the dangers of importing petroleum products and commissioned Lord Cowdray and his company S Pearson & Sons to undertake a survey of potential oil resources in mainland Britain.

The Pearson company began life in Bradford, West Yorkshire in 1844, first as a brick-maker and contractor originally founded by Samuel Pearson, but over the years had diversified under several managements, winning many contracts in

Above: The well head of Hardstoft No 1 still seeps a little "Tibshelf crude".

Photographs: Supplied by Ivan Brentnall, (Village sign) Creative Commons/Andrew Hill



Left: Tibshelf Oil Well No 3 under construction. Right: Oil pours from the baler as it's lifted from Hardstoft No 1 oilwell.

the UK, and North and Central America. By 1907, it owned some 600,000 acres of land in Mexico, investing heavily in refining facilities and shipping but found little oil resources.

Two years later, Weetman Pearson founded the Mexico Eagle Petroleum Company to take over S Pearson's oil concessions and interests in parts of Mexico and, on 27 December 1910, Pearson's drillers struck liquid gold on an unprecedented scale. An oil well on the Gulf of Mexico coast between Veracruz and Tampico flowed at a rate of 100,000 barrels daily and this single well turned the wheels of fortune for Pearson's oil business.

Four years later, when the war to end all wars began, Mexico had become one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world with Pearson's controlling around 60% of this production. Now boasting a significant pedigree of oil drilling and exploration to its CV, Lord Cowdray's firm was the one to which a beleaguered British government turned to in its hour of greatest need.

After much geological consultation, three regions were selected for possible oil resources: the Scottish Lothians, the Potteries of north Staffordshire, and the north Derbyshire coalfields.

The government funded 11 rigs: two in Scotland, two in Staffordshire and seven in the Derbyshire coalfield region. These were vital to explore the possibilities of any oil resource in aid of the war effort.

The coalfields of Derbyshire were favoured to have real potential for oil exploration with seepages evident in mine workings at Riddings, Langwith and Shirebrook already reported.

Indeed, oil seepage had been discovered at Riddings Colliery in 1847 with a flow rate of 250 gallons per week used for fuel in coal miners' lamps and for the lubrication of machinery. Several possible Derbyshire locations came under the geological microscope: Ironville, Ridgeway, Heath, Brimington and Renishaw but it was to be Hardstoft (Tibshelf) that was to prove the most lucrative.

Lord Cowdray was invited to a meeting on the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth estate to discuss local mineral and geological conditions, and to negotiate a lease for drilling rights on the duke's land. This then paved the way for initial trial drilling on boreholes. An office was established on Chesterfield High Street but it took 3½ years to complete intricate legal documents and contractual agreements. Eventually, on 10 September 1918, an agreement was signed with the ministry of munitions under which drilling under the supervision of staff contracted to S Pearson & Sons could begin.

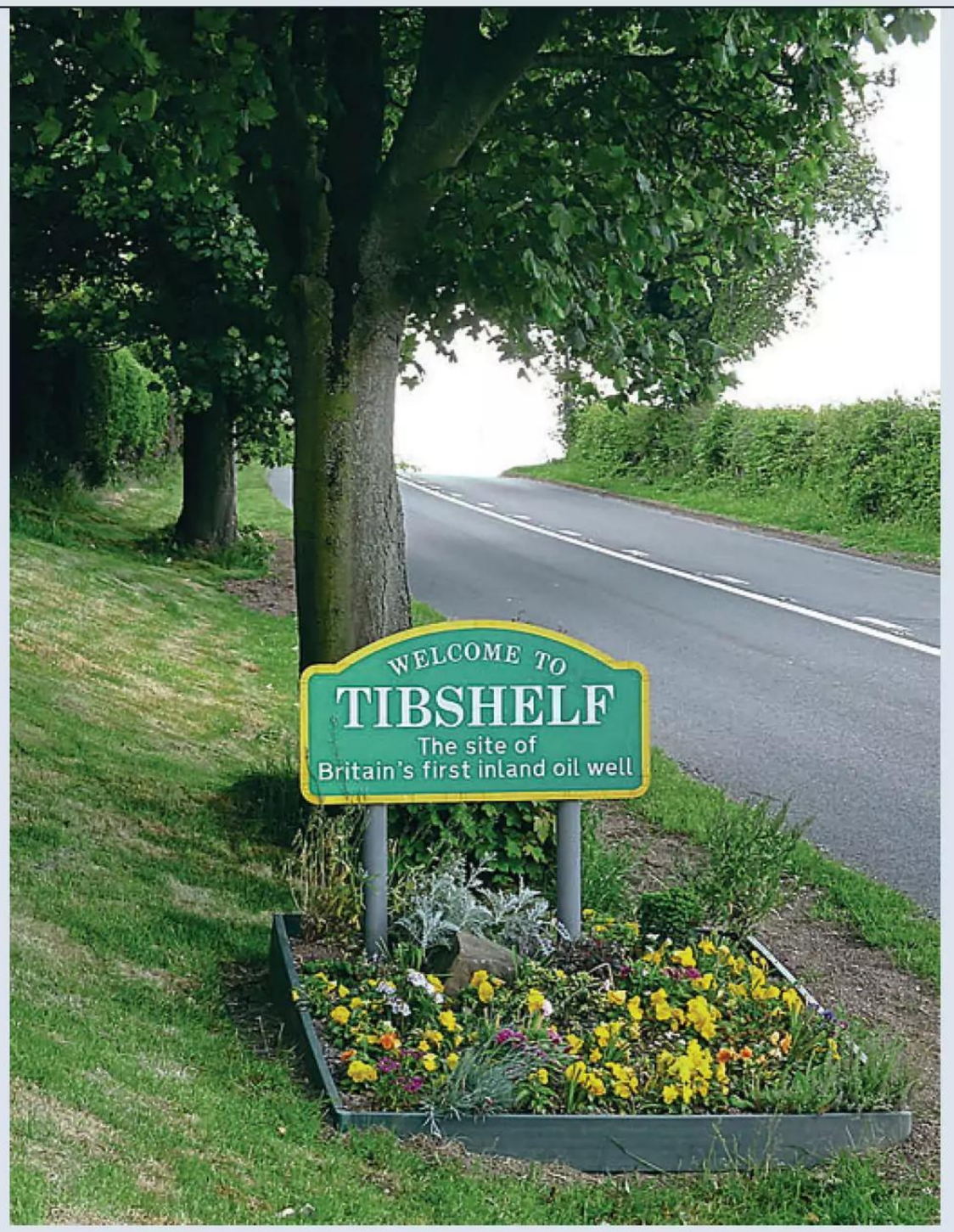
At the close of that month, just eight weeks before the end of World War One, the drilling finally started on the seven Derbyshire sites, the first at Hardstoft. Using the modern-day approach for its time of percussive drilling, or piledriver techniques, this involved the construction and erection of a tubular-framed steel derrick 85ft high for the handling of equipment lowered into the casings to line the bore. The drilling or piledriving averaged just 8.8 ft per day; a seriously noisy and dangerous occupation in its time.

Victor L Conaghan, from the US Bureau of Mines, was the drilling superintendent together with geologist Eugene Ickes. Stanford University's Roderick Crandall was in control of technical administration. The North American drillers settled into their new homes consisting of two wooden huts on site while some of them were able to take lodgings in the nearby village of Tibshelf.

It wasn't until eight months later, on 27 May 1919, that oil was finally struck at a depth of 3,070ft in a sandy limestone horizon. Oil was finally released on 7 June by which time the Great War was well and truly over. Pictures of the historic event featured in that week's edition of The London Illustrated News, causing quite a stir. The news was well received in the House of Commons.

Between then and December 1927, 2,500 tons of oil was produced from Hardstoft No 1 well, equating to 20,000 US barrels, a mean average of six barrels per day, which meant output compared well alongside modern US oil wells of that period. The oil itself was of good quality, mature, light and a dark brown in colour giving off a green fluorescence that resembled Pennsylvanian crude oil, offering many uses to industry and commerce. It was stored in a 12,000-barrel tank at the site and was initially transported by road to the nearby railway station at Pilsley and then, via the Great Central Railway, to the Pumpherston Refinery in Scotland. Eventually, a 4,500ft gravity-fed pipeline was laid directly from the well to Pilsley Station.

There was an intention to shoot the well with nitro-glycerine to stimulate production until it was discovered that transporting nitro-glycerine over public roads in England was illegal. For the next few years, oil flowed from the No 1 well under its own natural pressure against a column of oil and water exceeding 3,000ft without the requirement for cleaning or attention. But this bore was prone to waxing and silting as the conditions at its base never favoured a free flow of oil.



Left: Between June and December 1927, 2,500 tons of oil was produced from Hardstoft No 1 well, a mean average of six barrels per day. Right: The sign welcoming motorists to Tibshelf in the Bolsolver District of Derbyshire, home to Britain's first mainland oil well.

Between April and June 1921, the government carried out a pumping test which managed to increase the output from seven to 14 barrels per day. However, this exercise was not continued because the government was in no position to undertake commercial oil production and marketing; ownership and rights were already contentious.

In 1921, the government then decided to close all the original well sites apart from two, Hardstoft and the D'Arcy rig in Lothian, while parliament tried to resolve ownership of the oil. The Defence of the Realm Act in January 1918 covered the original drilling of the wells giving the government, or its agents, right of access to explore for oil, but the question of ownership of the oil was not resolved as the Petroleum Production Act of November 1918 was lost on amendment of its second reading as Labour MPs objected to payment of royalties to landowners.

With this bill failing and the Defence of the Realm Act being repealed on cessation of hostilities, the Duke of Devonshire served an injunction on the government. The Hardstoft oil well was taken over by the Duke of Devonshire who owned the mineral rights and the land on which the well was sunk. Under the terms of this settlement, this included paying the government for the plant and rig and paying compensation to Babbington Colliery Co in respect of a pillar of coal which had remained around the bore hole. The government was allowed to keep the finances raised for all oil so far sold.

In 1934, the Petroleum Production Act finally vested oil ownership in the Crown except for three existing licences. Two of them lapsed in the 1940s and the Duke of Devonshire remains the only person in the UK today to have the rights to oil under his estates.

Production of Hardstoft No 1 well was almost exhausted by the late 1930s and so D'Arcy Exploration Company was engaged to deepen the bore to increase production in aid of the World War Two effort. This saved the oil well until June 1945 when production was at an end. A small rig remained for three more years with oil slowly trickling on the surface and used for a small piggery unit on site. Blackwell Rural District Council used some of the site for domestic rubbish tipping in 1949. The well was capped in 1952 and the wooden huts used to house workers demolished.

The derelict and tree-covered site was tenanted to Mr Jeffrey, a farmer. It was then leased in 1957 to haulage company Mullen Brothers and was used by them to dispose and dump building rubble from the demolition of nearby Parachute Regiment training camp at Hardwick Park. Local concerns were raised by the tipping of such rubble. The trees on site were covered by a Tree Preservation Order yet were felled and the rural district council secured a prosecution requiring the building materials to be removed and new trees planted.

In September 1961, Mullen Brothers levelled and graded the site allowing Mother Nature to slowly begin its own reclamation. Mr Phillip Schofield acquired the site in 1977 to develop a nursery and garden centre, aptly entitled the Oilwells Garden Centre. The well head of Hardstoft No 1 still seeps a little "Tibshelf crude" and the site is sensitively maintained and retains some historical interest to this day.

The initial reason and desire to find oil in mainland UK by aiding the 1914-18 conflict arrived too late to be of any significance but all was not lost. A small Derbyshire village by the name of Tibshelf had its profile raised internationally if only for a moment in its history thanks to Hardstoft No 1 – Britain's first mainland oil well.

The author expresses acknowledgement and grateful thanks to Ivan Brentnall of Tibshelf for his helpful collaboration as well as The Geological Society of London.

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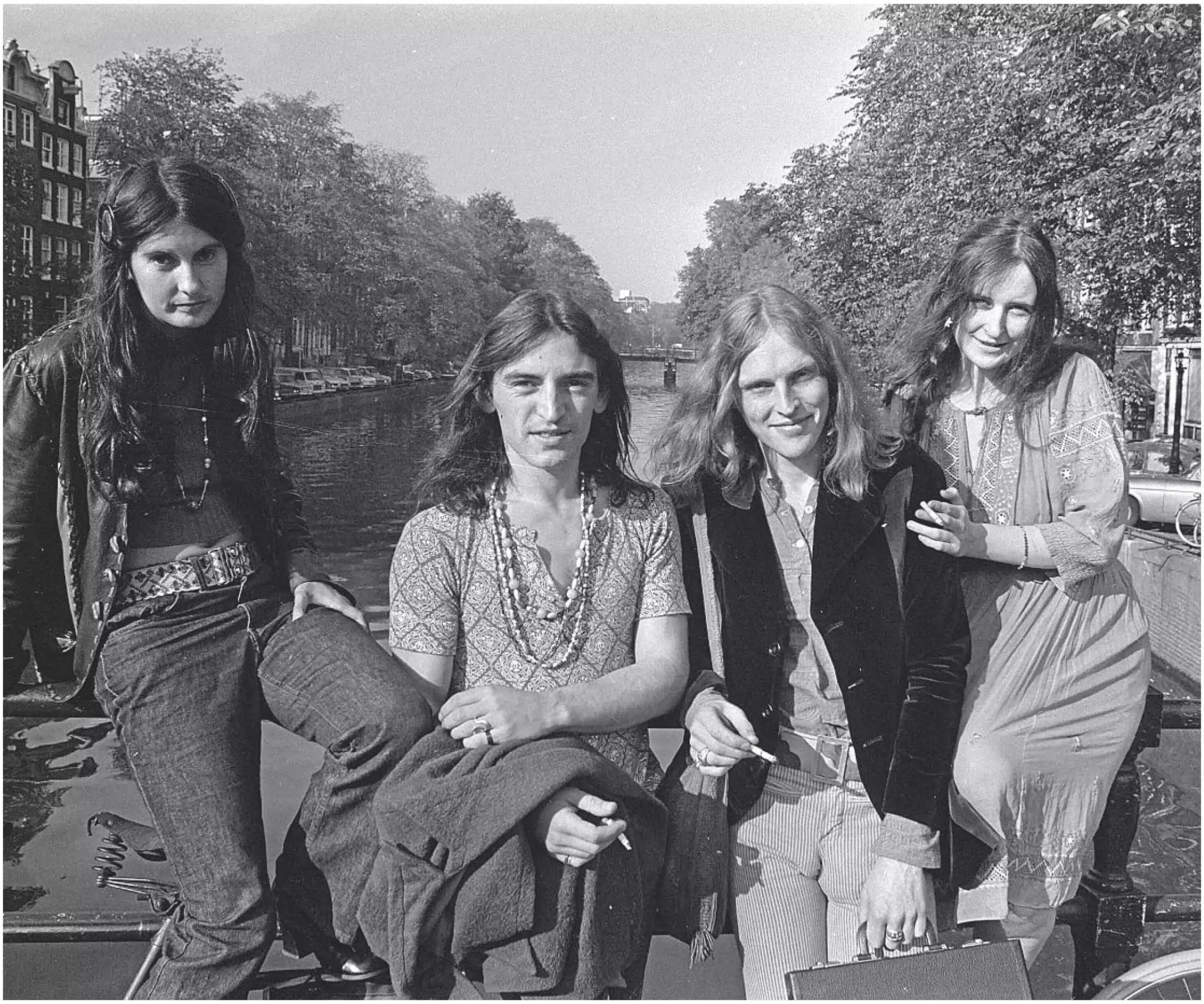


Woodstock It Certainly Wasn't

Steve Anderson remembers the music festival that was more than a match for almost any British counterpart, then or since

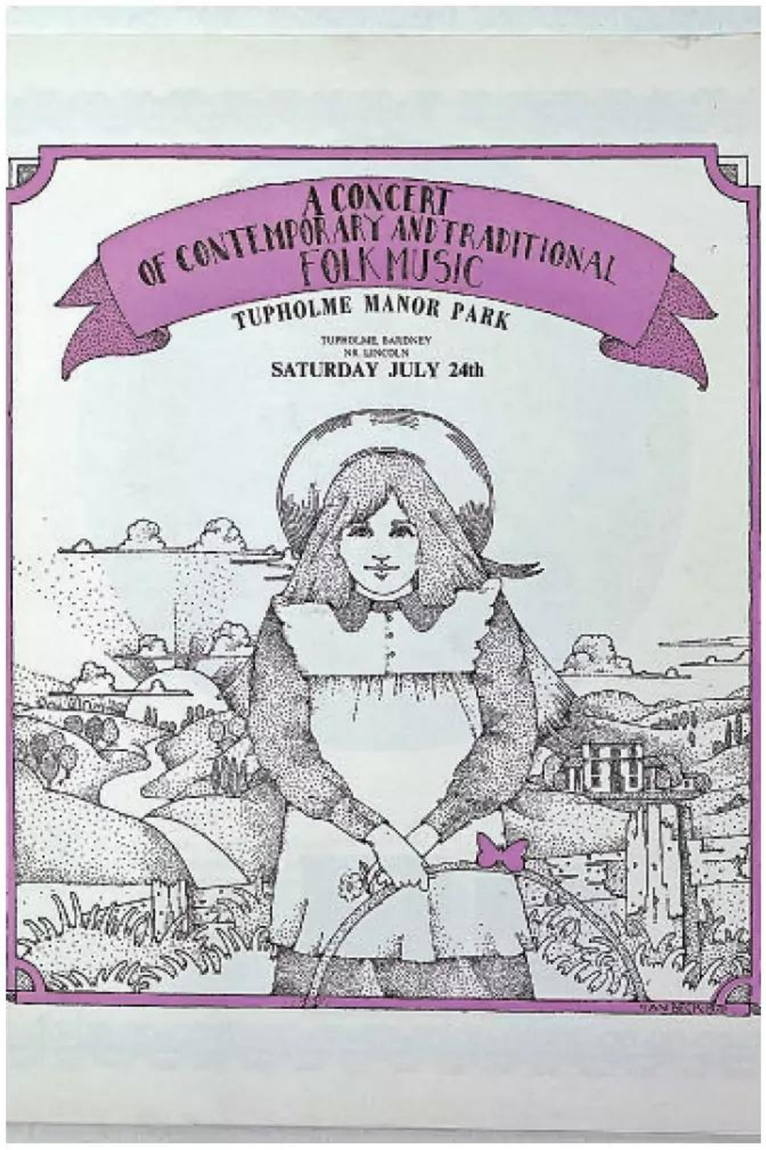
Although it wasn't Woodstock, the fondly-remembered Concert of Contemporary and Traditional Folk Music – to quote its official title – was more than a match for almost any British counterpart, then or since, when it took to the stage in Lincolnshire 54 years ago on 24 July 1971.

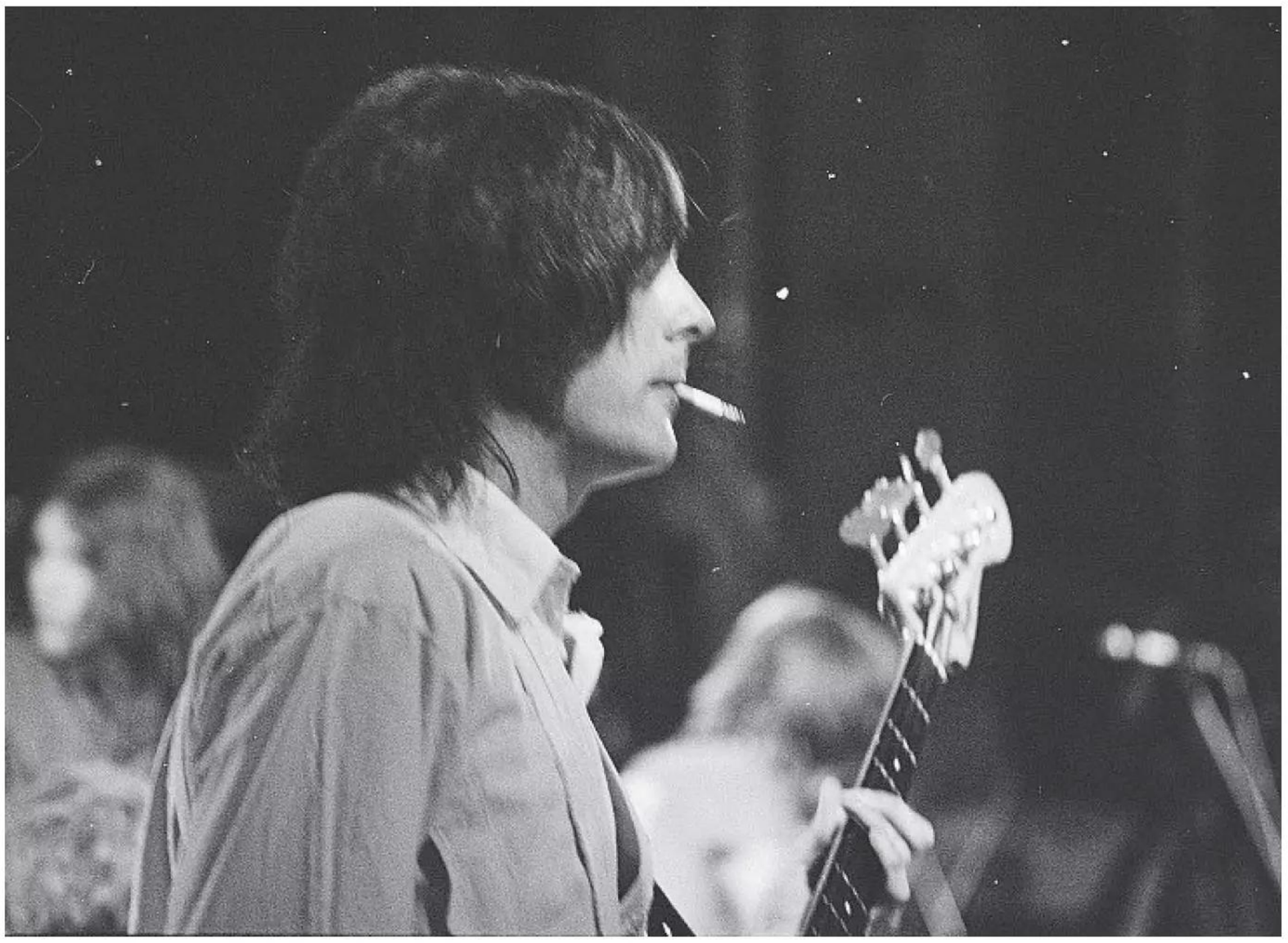
Austin Mitchell, then a young Yorkshire Television reporter, would no doubt have expressed similar sentiments when he stumbled over my outstretched legs during a momentous set by co-headliner James Taylor. "You've got a friend," was not my initial reaction to the man who would later become the MP for Great Grimsby. But he did apologise, I seem to recall, as he, a cameraman, a sound engineer and a producer stepped across yet more vulnerable limbs.

I was one of a dozen people from the Yorkshire town and port of Goole who

Top: Among the many pioneers of British folk-rock competing for attention on the Tupholme Manor stage were the Incredible String Band.

Photographs: (The Incredible String Band) Dutch National Archives, (Dave Pegg) Fotoburo De Boer





Left: The Concert of Contemporary and Traditional Folk Music drew a crowd of 60,000 and included acts such as the Byrds, Pentangle and Steeleye Span. Right: Featuring in the festival lineup was bassist Dave Pegg, a stalwart of Fairport Convention and, later, Jethro Tull.

hired a minibus to attend the day-long event at Tupholme Manor Park, Bardney, near Lincoln just 60-odd miles away by road when the M62, Humber Bridge and other "modern" transport hubs in the area were still at the late-planning stage.

With the exception of Mike Foster and, I recall, Rachel Petch, I can't remember the names of my fellow travellers who made the trip to Lincolnshire, but we were among an estimated crowd of 60,000 who were treated to one of the greatest gatherings of folk/folk-rock "royalty", along with a few other stars whose CVs didn't quite embrace that loosely-defined musical genre.

James Taylor's appearance at Bardney served as a showcase for many of his most famous numbers, including the aforementioned You've Got a Friend, which reached No 4 in the Official UK Singles Chart and, more significantly, topped the so-called Billboard Hot 100. His repertoire also included Fire and Rain and other notables from his Sweet Baby James album.

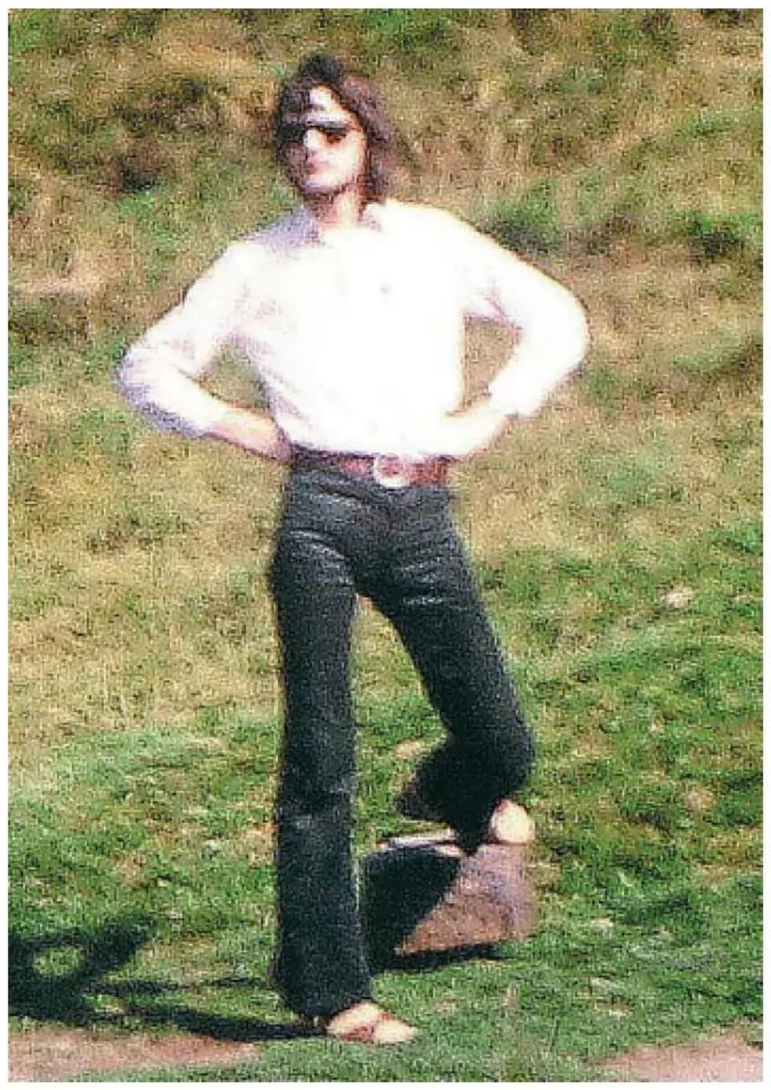
Although the festival was billed as being of an acoustic nature, equal billing was accorded to the Byrds, who are widely regarded as one of the most influential rock acts of that era. Their electric performance – both in terms of atmosphere and equipment used – embraced Mr Tambourine Man, Turn! Turn! Turn!, and Jesus Is Just Alright, but I'm almost certain there was also a rendition of Chestnut Mare and other favourites from the band's early years.

American artists were not the only stars, however. Competing for attention on the Tupholme Manor stage were many of the pioneers of British folk-rock, among them Steeleye Span, Pentangle, the Incredible String Band, Martin Carthy, Ralph McTell, and Fairport Convention's Dave Swarbrick, Sandy Denny and Richard Thompson.

Also featured in the festival lineup was a young bassist called Dave Pegg, another Fairport stalwart and, later, Jethro Tull member, who went on to write a glowing tribute for my 2017 novel Karma: Where it All Went Wrong. Peggy, as he's known to millions of fans worldwide, continues to play both with Fairport and other musicians at home and overseas, principally Belfast singer-guitarist and humourist Anthony John Clarke.

Not to be outdone by the mainly British folk-rock pioneers whose Bardney performances occupied a good third of the time on stage, over-the-pond stars Dion Francis DiMucci (known universally as just Dion), Tom Paxton and Tim Hardin demonstrated just why they were at the forefront of American popular music. If anyone needed an excuse to spend a summer's day and night in the Lincolnshire countryside, Hardin had the perfect Reason to Believe, of course.

As an extra bonus – not that one was required – Buffy Sainte-Marie was also on hand to prove that men were not the only stars to shine at the 1971 extravaganza. Her seminal song Soldier Blue, a Top 10 hit in Britain and around the world, was



Steve Anderson was at Tupholme Manor Park for the Concert of Contemporary and Traditional Folk Music on 24 July 1971.

the soundtrack of the cult western of the same name, which I subsequently saw at the Carlton picture house in Goole.

Censored by the British Board of Film Classification for its graphic depiction of sex and violence, it was, and remains, one of the most upsetting movies I've ever experienced.

Also worthy of note was an appearance at Tupholme by the American folk and blues duo Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee, whose personal relationship was not of the most convivial nature; they played a short set, sandwiched between other performances reflecting an eclectic mix of what would later become known loosely as "world music".

As for my personal, non-musical recollections of this Concert of Contemporary and Traditional Folk Music, two highlights spring to mind. Despite attracting so many thousands of festivalgoers, some from as far afield as Australia and Canada, there was very little controversy. I do recall a few idiots tearing down a section of wooden fencing to serve as fuel for an evening barbecue. And, according to various, uncorroborated reports, there were isolated incidences of drug abuse, not among the Goole contingent, I hasten to add.

One of my oddest memories of that July weekend has nothing to do with the festival itself but with what happened back in Goole in the early hours the next day. It remains a mystery, at least for two of us, to this day. So, if you lived in Marshfield Road more than half a century ago and wondered why you woke up one morning to stumble across unexpected riches on your doorstep, read on...

Mike Foster and I were walking home, perhaps at 2am, when we chanced upon a purse containing a not-insubstantial amount of cash that, I recall, would probably have paid for both our minibus fares and the concert admission fees. We'd no idea what to do with the find and, with little hesitation, decided to poke it through the nearest letterbox – at a shop, I think – in the hope that someone would "do the right thing" and hand it to the police, as we should have done. There was never any newspaper report of either missing money or its chance discovery and neither Mike nor I had any intention of making inquiries as to its origins or subsequent destiny.

I, for one, would dearly love to know the answers to both riddles. Perhaps they'd form the basis for a song I'll send to my old friend Dave Pegg for his next festival appearance.

THE BRITISH INVASION

Members of 1960s bands share their memories of making it big in the US with **Martin Claytor**

News of a British invasion of America might be a cause for some alarm, but in the mid-1960s there was no need to panic – the movement was cultural and led to a huge boom in the long-term popularity of British music in the US. By 1964, records by American artists had been a feature in the British charts for several years but there was little sign of the American public taking notice of British music – then along came Beatlemania in the States and everything changed.

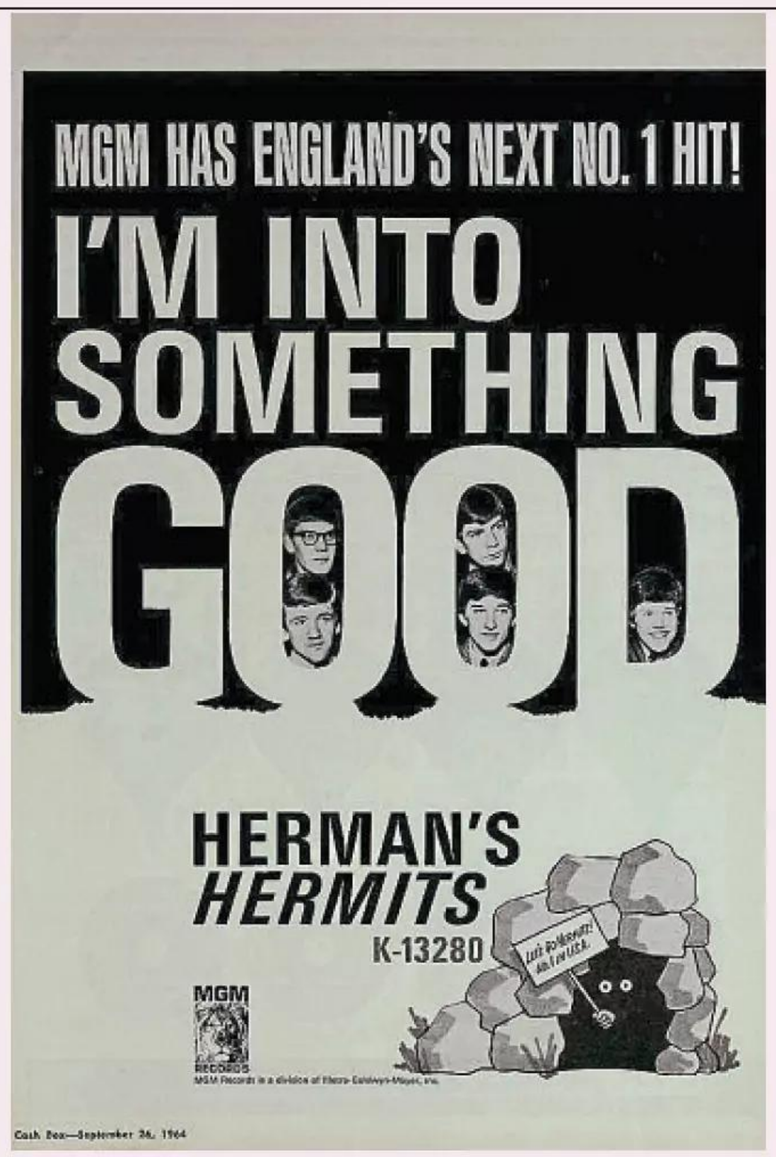
A Beatles trip to America, followed by television appearances and huge publicity, saw the group immediately dominate the US charts with a succession of hits – a further tour that year saw the band performing to wildly enthusiastic audiences, including the Hollywood Bowl gig. The Beatles, soon followed by the more blues-orientated Rolling Stones, had opened the floodgates. Suddenly, Britain was in fashion and a mainly younger American age group couldn't get enough of this type of rock and pop music.

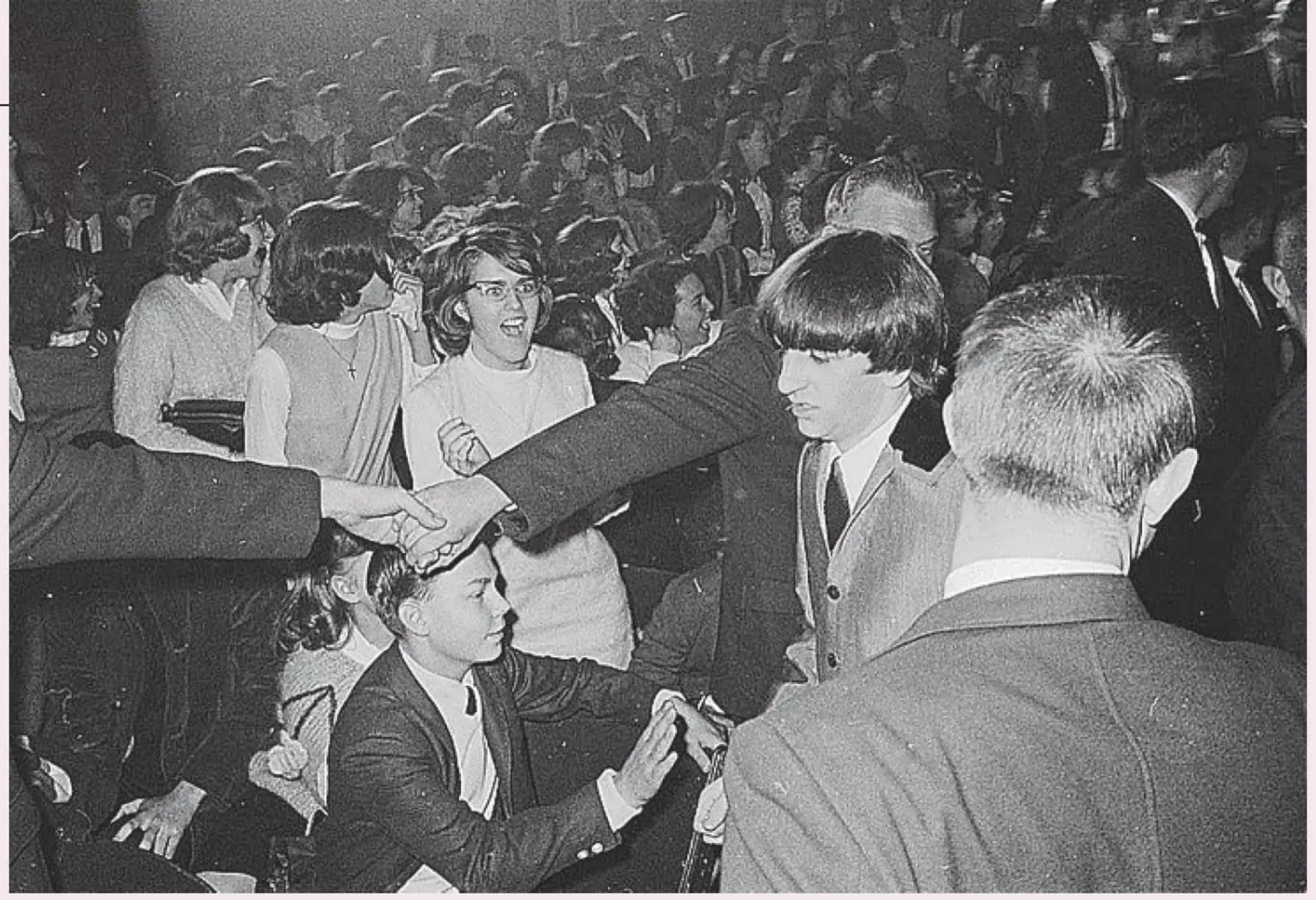
With their singalong lyrics and catchy tunes, the records seemed more exciting than many of the traditional style of US chart songs. British bands and individual singers, achieving such success this side of the Atlantic, soon began to exploit the exciting new market – the "invasion's" first wave had begun.

One of the most successful of the "invasion" artists were Herman's Hermits, who had several big American hits between 1964 and 1968, including two unusual No 1 records in 1965. Keith Hopwood, guitarist and backing singer with the group, sums up why Mrs Brown You've Got a Lovely Daughter and I'm Henry the VIII, I Am did so well – despite never being released as A-sides over here. "It was the Englishness of it all," he remembers. "It was really a novelty

Top: Steve Mariott, Ronnie Lane, Kenney Jones and Jimmy Winston of Small Faces, whose Itchycoo Park and Tin Soldier were UK and US hits.

Photographs: (The Beatles) US Library of Congress/Marion S Trikosko





Left: Herman's Hermits recorded I'm into Something Good as their debut single, reaching No 1 in the UK on 30 September 1964, peaking at No 13 in the US later that year. Right: The Beatles performed at the Washington Coliseum in February 1964, the year in which they had eight entries in the Billboard Hot 100 singles of the year.

then… they were certainly not for UK consumption."

The "invasion" effect was almost immediate. In 1963, there were no British artists in the Billboard Hot 100 singles of the year – 12 months later, with America taken by storm, it was very different with almost a quarter of places taken up by the "invaders". As well as having the top two spots in the list with I Want To Hold Your Hand and She Loves You, the Beatles featured a further six times on the chart – other entries came from Manfred Mann (Do Wah Diddy Diddy); the Dave Clark Five (Glad All Over and four other hits); Billy J Kramer & the Dakotas (Little Children, Bad to Me); Peter and Gordon (A World Without Love); the Honeycombs (Have I the Right); Dusty Springfield (Wishin' and Hopin'); the Animals (House of the Rising Sun); Gerry and the Pacemakers (Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying); the Kinks (You Really Got Me), and the Searchers (Don't Throw Your Love Away, Needles and Pins).

This success meant breaking into the American market was now a realistic aim for British bands and solo singers. However, before Herman's Hermits had their 1965 hits, Keith Hopwood recalls he didn't really give it much thought: "I suppose so, but I was only 18 at the time and the fact that we had a deal and a No 1 record in the UK [I'm Into Something Good] was enough."

Kenney Jones, legendary drummer with Small Faces, later also with the Who and the Faces, remembers there was another reason for not immediately building upon their UK popularity a couple of years later: "We obviously wanted to but were too busy touring Europe. Had we had more time as a band I think that this would have been a target and something we could have achieved."

The hits kept on coming and constant appearances in the Billboard charts the next year meant records by "invasion" artists featured even more strongly in the end-of-year summary – with more than a third of the entries coming from British musicians. The American record buyers eagerly collected this "new" music, meaning groups such as the Mindbenders, the Hollies and the Troggs were joined by solo artists Petula Clark, Tom Jones, Crispian St Peters and Donovan in adding to those who were continuing their success. Such was the continued exposure of British groups on US radio stations that by 1967, after only three years, their presence in the various American charts came to be the norm. Correspondingly, sales of records by many American artists declined – leading to a downturn in their careers.

Awareness of the "mod" culture in Britain had also started to grow, and become popular, in the US and some of the "invasion's" music reflected this jaunty style. Small Faces, whose Itchycoo Park and Tin Soldier had been UK and US hits in 1967, typified the "mod" look but Kenney Jones explains why the band didn't have more American success at the time. "It was all down to management and the record companies, so I wasn't really surprised… I think that the Americans were ready for this type of music…a lot of the fan base for the Small Faces now are from the US and we had a lot of later success with the Faces over there."

The American public was also keen to see the British artists live or on US programmes – the Beatles and the Rolling Stones were obviously headline attractions, but many others crossed the Atlantic during the latter half of the 1960s. Eventually, a few of the particularly successful would spend much more time there either touring or having a permanent base.

Herman's Hermits appeared on several prominent US television shows and films, but Keith Hopwood didn't see a complete move as an option: "We spent a lot of time in LA and I had relatives there. It did cross my mind at one point, but in those days living on the other side of the world just wouldn't have worked like it does now."

Unusually, Small Faces were a band that didn't go over to the States as Kenney Jones remembers: "We would love to have toured the US but, as a group of young lads who were told what to do by management and record labels, I don't think it was something they had ever planned for. If we were together for longer though, who knows?"

The period between 1964 and 1967 had seen the first stage of a British "invasion", but it would just be the start of a long-term change in the way that all aspects of British music were viewed in the US – paving the way for continued success in subsequent decades. Many of the younger generation in Britain were becoming enthused by the swinging 60s London scene, with attitudes towards tradition and authority shifting.

This rebellious feeling was picked up by Americans of a similar age and they became fascinated by what was happening over here – music became their starting point and the British "invasion" artists gave them what they wanted.

Clever Clogs

Far from being a northern stereotype, clogs were affordable footwear once worn across the country, as **Nina Hoole** finds out

Today, clogs are mainly associated with the north of England, but this hard-wearing, affordable footwear was common across Britain from Victorian times right through World War Two. With a shaped wooden sole, leather upper, and an iron hoop underneath, clogs were cheaper than leather shoes, stronger, and better able to cope with wet conditions. They kept feet warm in the cold, and cool in the heat.

Although they had already been worn for hundreds of years, the rise in the numbers of factory workers boosted their popularity, and farmhands, dock labourers, miners and mill workers all relied on this sturdy footwear. As time went on, clogs became associated with the manufacturing-heavy Midlands, north of England and southern Scotland, but eventually came to be seen as a symbol of working-class poverty.

Clogs cost about two days' wage, whereas leather shoes could cost about a week's wage. Leather shortages during World War Two temporarily boosted sales, as clogs were readily available and needed no clothing coupons. But postwar, as new factories could mass produce shoes and prices came down, families wanted to show that they could afford to leave the stigma of clog-wearing behind.

In the 1901 census, there were more than 6,000 clog makers. Today there are fewer than 20, but clogs still have their place. Modern clog makers supply safety footwear to factories, casual shoes to the public, and dance shoes to clog and morris enthusiasts. Although other countries, including the Netherlands, France and Japan, have their own history of wooden shoes or pattens, the British style is traditionally non-slip-on, with a leather upper that would have been fastened with laces for men and clasps for women.

My mother-in-law grew up in Lancashire and remembers her mother, a weaver in a textile mill, wearing clogs in the 1950s. "I could always tell when she was coming back from work. Her clogs made such a clatter on the cobbles on our back street," she recalls.

Her younger sister wore clogs at an early age; by 18 months, she hadn't

Top: Rows of finished clogs at Colne Valley Museum near Huddersfield, West Yorkshire which has a workshop set up as it would have been in 1910.

Photographs: (Mouseman) Robert Thompson's Craftsmen Limited

Clog making tools on display at Ryedale Folk Museum, an open-air museum in the village of Hutton-le-Hole, near York in the North York Moors National Park.

shown any interest in walking, and her parents were advised to buy her a pair of clogs in the hopes the noise they made while walking would excite her interest. It worked! My mother-in-law enjoyed watching the cobbler father of a friend at work but never wore clogs herself. By the 1950s, they were practical workwear, rather than everyday footwear.

Colne Valley Museum (01484 659762, colnevalleymuseum.org.uk), near Huddersfield, West Yorkshire has a workshop set up as it would have been in 1910, and volunteers demonstrate techniques to visitors. The sole of a clog is carved from a different wood depending on the purpose of the clog. Ash is well-suited to dancing clogs to be used indoors in the dry, but sycamore copes better in the wet. Beech is a hard wood to carve by hand and is more suited to machine cutting. Scottish cloggers often used local birch, but many modern clog makers favour sycamore or alder. The wood is carved while green and then left for weeks or months to season and dry out.

The leather for the uppers would have been local, or a wax-impregnated variety imported from India called kip leather, which needed heat to shape it. The leather pieces were cut, sewn together with waxed cotton, shaped on a last, and fixed to the sole with metal tacks. Horseshoe-like clog irons fitted underneath the sole lift them up from the wet, helping the clog to last longer, though today rubber can be used

It's Mouseman!

Long before Superman or Batman were created in the United States, we had Mouseman. Not a mythical superhero, but a real, superb craftsman, from God's own county, Yorkshire.

Robert "Mouseman" Thompson was born in Kilburn, near Thirsk, on 7 May 1876, and spent his whole life there, dying on 8 December 1955. A well-known craftsman and follower of the Arts and Crafts movement, Thompson specialised in traditional oak furniture that featured a carved mouse as his trademark. For years, it was said that the mouse came about as the result of a conversation between Thompson and another craftsman in 1919, when they talked about being "as poor as a church mouse" while involved in creating a screen for a church.

However, Thompson's great-great-grandson, Simon Thompson Cartwright, recently gave the real version of why the mouse became the emblem: "Robert was working with some of his craftsmen and a couple of apprentices in a mystery church. They were busy fitting some rear panelling behind an altar on the back wall and the apprentice was on his hands and knees and this little mouse jumped out and it scared the living daylights out of him. They were teasing him about it through the day.

"This joke went on all week while they were completing the project and at the end of the week Robert climbed up into the rafters and carved a mouse in there for a bit of fun. From there that image of a little church mouse stuck in his head and word got around in the workshop and every now and then they were carving mice on to furniture."

Ampleforth College, founded in Yorkshire in 1803, is known as the Roman Catholic Eton. A previous headmaster, Father Paul Nevill, who died in 1954 after 30 years as head, was a fan of Thompson's work. He commissioned much of the school's furniture and liked it so much that he kept employing him. The college boarding houses are a repository of Mouseman work, as is the library and, indeed, most of the school buildings.

Thompson's work can be seen in St Michael and All Angels at Hubberholme. During the 1930s, he was responsible for creating the chairs, pews and choir stalls. More craftsmen, including Thompson's apprentices, found inspiration in the little rodent, so we can find work by Thomas "Gnomeman" Whittaker, Malcolm "Foxman" Pipes and Robert "Rabbitman" Heap, among others.

The restaurateur Marco Pierre White is a fan of Mouseman pieces and has used them in his homes and restaurants – an expensive addiction. Some really special pieces have sold for up to £40,000, but not everything is out of reach of most pockets. Thompson's workshop continued after his death, in fact continues still as Robert Thompson's Craftsmen Ltd (01347 869100, robertthompsons.co.uk), and the more recent pieces, still top quality, start around £100. Cheeseboards, with a little mouse, are especially popular.

Michael Montagu

instead. A steel endplate protects the front of the clog from being scuffed while the wearer is kneeling. If looked after, a pair of clogs can last for decades, and it was common for clogs to be passed on through the family, especially children's clogs when feet grew.

St Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff (0300 111 2 333, museum.wales/stfagans) also has a clog workshop, and a professional clog maker who demonstrates the craft, and can take orders for commissions. Bespoke clogs made to precisely fit the customer's feet are thought to be good for a variety of podiatry conditions.

Walkley Clogs, of Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire, is the UK's largest maker of clogs, mass-producing wooden soles and clog irons using their original 80-year-old machinery. It's possible to visit the factory to see the cloggers at work, preparing orders to be sent around the world. Offering a range of more than 40 styles of casual shoes, they also supply safety clogs to steelworks, glassmakers and other heavy industry, meeting strict EU safety standards with this impressively sturdy footwear.

The other main demand for modern clogs comes from folk dancers. It is thought that the origins of English clog dancing came from factory looms, with workers tapping in time to machine rhythms. It is a step dance style using the legs and feet, tapping heels and toes while the upper body stays relatively still. Very popular in late 19th century music halls, there were many local competitions for prize money, and even world championships.

Welsh clog dancing is slightly different and a little more athletic, often featuring tricks such as snuffing out a candle or leaping over a broom. Clog dancing is still keenly competed in eisteddfods and other cultural festivals around Wales.

Today there are only a small number of working cloggers, and the registered charity Heritage Crafts lists clog making on its red list of critically endangered crafts. There are just one or two makers left in Britain who do the whole process solely using hand tools, though others use machinery to cut out the initial wooden sole, and then shape, assemble and finish the clogs by hand. However, a growing interest in folk traditions and hand-crafted goods means that while the craftsmen might be few, their work is still highly valued.

WRITE ON TIME

Angeline Wilcox traces the history and influence of Pitman shorthand

Over the centuries, a vital tool of the trade for secretaries, journalists, clerks and court reporters has been shorthand. Although technology has brought us Dictaphones and smartphones with built-in voice recorders, shorthand is still taught in various forms today. To the uninitiated, it appears a bewildering mass of indecipherable squiggles, but to many of us it has provided a passport to jobs and careers. It has also played a crucial role in the development of the media, communications, trade, law and education.

When you consider the average speed for adults writing in longhand is 10-20 words per minute, and contrast that with shorthand speeds of anywhere between 50-150 wpm, you begin to realise what an impact it can have in terms of quickly recording information, particularly the spoken word. But where did it begin?

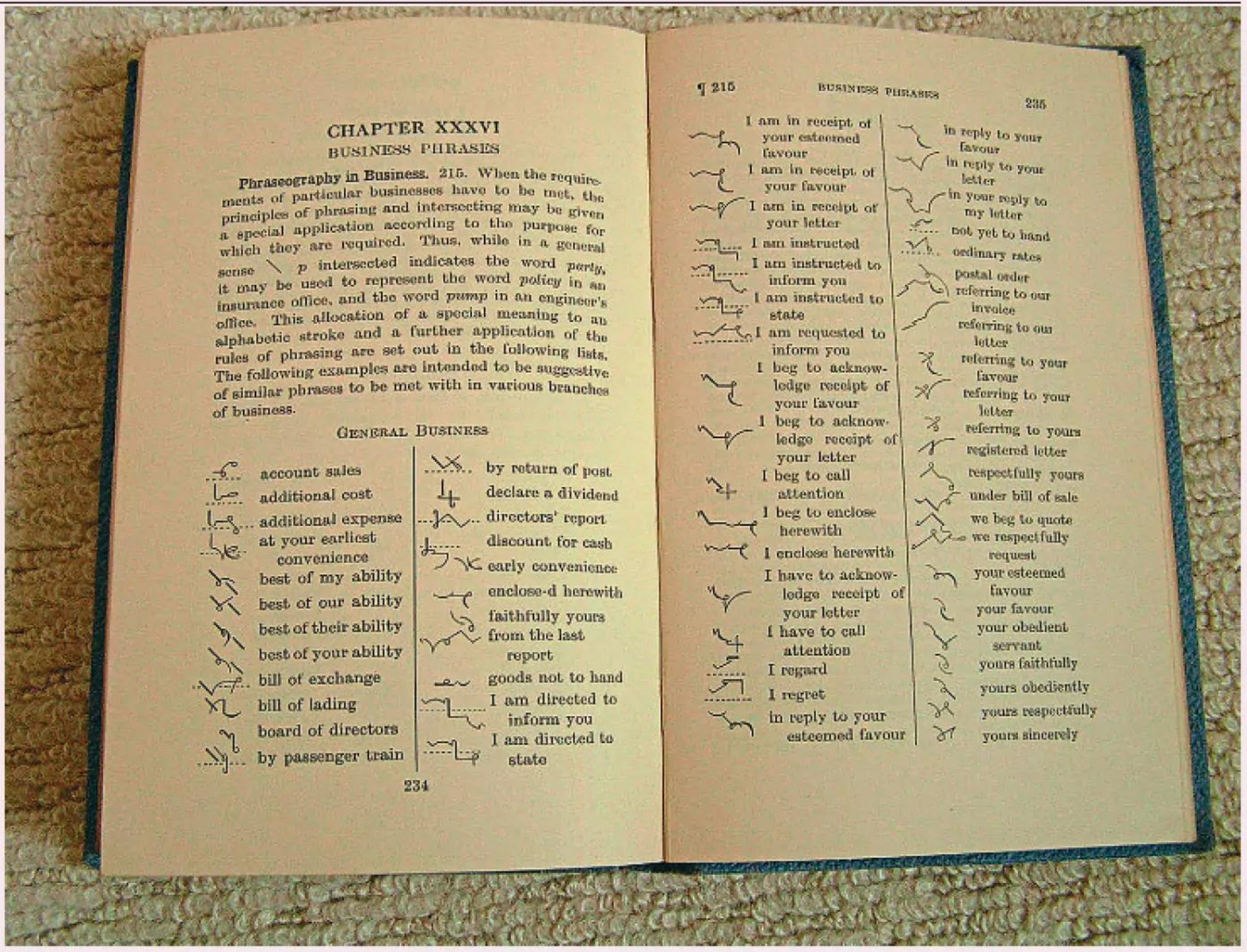
The origins of shorthand can be traced back to ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations. British interest in what was known as "short-writing" started in the late 16th century, with Timothy Bright's Characterie; An Arte of Shorte, Swifte and Secrete Writing by Character. Other systems followed, among them Thomas Shelton's, which was used by notable figures including Samuel Pepys and Isaac Newton. In the 18th century, John Byrom's New Universal Shorthand was taught at Oxford and Cambridge universities.

However, in 1837, a schoolteacher by the name of Isaac Pitman (1813-1897) launched his revolutionary method of shorthand, with the publication of a booklet entitled Stenographic Sound-Hand. This heralded a landmark in written communications and would become the best-known shorthand in the world.

Born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, Isaac's teaching career took him to Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire where one of the

Top: Over the centuries, Pitman shorthand has been a vital tool of the trade for clerical staff, including shorthand-typist Mrs Ridley at the Institute of Labour Management.

Photograph: (Mrs Ridley) Crown Copyright



CHAPTER XXXVI

BUSINESS PHRASES

Phraseography in Business. 215. When the requirements of particular businesses have to be met, the principles of phrasing and intersecting may be given a special application according to the purpose for which they are required. Thus, while in a general sense \ *p* intersected indicates the word *perig*, it may be used to represent the word *policy* in an insurance office, and the word *pump* in an engineer's office. This allocation of a special meaning to an alphabetic stroke and a further application of the rules of phrasing are set out in the following lists. The following examples are intended to be suggestive of similar phrases to be met with in various branches of business.

GENERAL BUSINESS

account sales
additional cost
additional expense
at your earliest convenience
best of my ability
best of our ability
best of their ability
best of your ability
bill of exchange
bill of lading
board of directors
by passenger train
by return of post
declare a dividend
directors' report
discount for cash
early convenience
enclose-d herewith
faithfully yours
from the last report
goods not to hand
I am directed to inform you
I am directed to state

234

¶ 215 BUSINESS PHRASES 235

I am in receipt of your esteemed favour
I am in receipt of your favour
I am in receipt of your letter
I am instructed
I am instructed to inform you
I am instructed to state
I am requested to inform you
I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour
I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter
I beg to call attention
I beg to enclose herewith
I enclose herewith
I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter
I have to call attention
I regard
I regret
in reply to your esteemed favour
in reply to your favour
in reply to your letter
in your reply to my letter
not yet to hand
ordinary rates
postal order
referring to our invoice
referring to our letter
referring to your favour
referring to your letter
referring to yours
registered letter
respectfully yours
under bill of sale
we beg to quote
we respectfully request
your esteemed favour
your favour
your obedient servant
yours faithfully
yours obediently
yours respectfully
yours sincerely

Left: Schoolteacher Isaac Pitman (1813-1897) launched his revolutionary method of shorthand in 1837 with the publication of a booklet entitled Stenographic Sound-Hand. Right: Shorthand outlines from the world of business in a Pitman textbook.

subjects he taught was an 18th century shorthand created by Samuel Taylor. Isaac was fascinated by how written characters could be used to represent sounds, which was known as "phonography". He subsequently devised a phonetic shorthand, based on the sound rather than the spelling of words. A range of symbols, including thin and thick lines, circles, loops, hooks, curved strokes, dots and dashes replaced conventional letters. Short forms of commonly used words and phrases were also incorporated to enable much faster writing.

In 1839, Isaac moved to Bath and established a phonetics institute for teaching his shorthand. Interest and demand for training steadily increased, and the institute had to move to larger premises on a further three occasions. In addition to giving lessons in person, Isaac realised the potential of providing correspondence courses. Students would receive a text in shorthand, which they had to transcribe and then post back to the institute for marking. Although speed was of the essence with shorthand, it wasn't until the mid-1850s that the first Pitman speed certificates were issued.

Dedication to work was paramount to Isaac. He constantly perfected his shorthand and set up a publishing house to print the required textbooks, manuals, dictionaries and journals. In recognition of his efforts, Pitman's printed shorthand was awarded a bronze medal at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

Undoubtedly, Isaac was the shorthand genius, but two of his brothers – Benjamin (Benn) and Jacob – assisted him, especially when it came to taking Pitman to an international audience. Jacob introduced and taught it in Australia, while Benn did the same in America. As a result of Benn's shorthand ability, he was also the official reporter for several notable American trials in the 1860s, including that of the conspirators involved in the assassination of President Lincoln.

Back in Britain, the latter half of the 19th century saw further progress for Isaac. The Royal Society of Arts began offering shorthand examinations and the first Pitman's Metropolitan School, which taught commercial and business subjects, opened in London. Pitman shorthand was acknowledged by the government in the 1889 Technical Instruction Act and parliamentary stenographers starting using it to record proceedings for Hansard.

Isaac was keen to bring his two sons, Alfred and Ernest, into the business and formed a partnership with them in the 1880s. Although he was a successful businessman, Isaac always regarded himself as an educator and a reformer. He wanted to "educate anyone of any class from anywhere who could read and had a desire to learn". In the progressive Victorian age, he saw the need to equip students with skills that would benefit them, and society, in a world that was increasingly driven by commerce and communications.

In 1894, Isaac's endeavours were recognised with a knighthood from Queen Victoria. He retired the following year to the family home in Bath's glorious Royal Crescent and his eldest son, Alfred, took over the business. Isaac died on 22 January 1897 and a memorial in Bath Abbey highlights "his work prodigious, the achievement worldwide".

Thanks to Isaac's sons, his legacy continued into the next century and beyond. The New Era edition of Pitman was published in 1922, the same year that a world record of 350 words per minute was set by an American, Nathan Behrin. Later, in 1975, the Pitman 2000 system was launched with further improvements and updates for another generation of students. Today, Pitman is used in more than 15 different languages. Other types of shorthand, such as Gregg (1888) and Teeline (1968) have emerged, but Sir Isaac Pitman's is eminent because of its incredible history and influence.

On a personal note, shorthand has spanned the generations in my family. Grandma used the Gregg system, Mum was taught Pitman, and I learned Teeline. For all of us, it was a valuable and essential qualification for our very different jobs, but don't ask who had the fastest speed. Despite retiring from work many years ago, Mum still makes notes in Pitman shorthand every day. Now that really is proof of a well-practised skill that stands the test of time.

Keeping the Holmes Fires Burning

Chris Hallam reveals how Sherlock Holmes did his bit to defeat the Nazis

The months leading up to the outbreak of World War Two saw 20th Century Fox release two new films starring Basil Rathbone as the great Baker Street detective, Sherlock Holmes, and Nigel Bruce as his loyal sidekick, Dr Watson. Though far from the first screen adaptation of a Holmes adventure, The Hound of the Baskervilles, released in March 1939, did mark a definite turning point, in that for the first time, the drama had a clear Victorian setting.

With the original stories still written relatively recently, all previous Holmes screen adaptations had simply updated the action to the present day. For this film, however, Holmes and Watson's exploits on Dartmoor were specifically set in 1889 (a period then still within living memory) and such conventions as Holmes' deerstalker and his "elementary, my dear Watson" were introduced to the Holmes legend for the first time.

The second film, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, shifted the action on to 1894. This time, there is one glaring historical anachronism. At one point, a disguised Holmes sings I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside, a ditty not written until 1907. Most viewers were probably too distracted to notice, however. The film was released on 1 September 1939, the same day Germany invaded Poland. Britain was at war just two days later.

Rathbone and Bruce continued to play the characters on radio. By the time Universal Pictures took on the franchise in 1942 and started making the films again, the United States was at war, too. With the world riven by global conflict, it was felt continuing to base the great detective's adventures in the past might risk making them seem irrelevant.

After an introduction, reminding us that Holmes is an "immortal character" who is both "ageless, invincible and unchanging," we then launch into an adventure which sees Holmes and Watson transferred to the present-day, wartime 1940s. The change is neatly symbolised by an early scene in which Holmes rejects his old-fashioned deerstalker in favour of a more modern-looking fedora. Elsewhere, letters are switched for telephones and hansom cabs are replaced by motorcars and aeroplanes.

Rathbone's Holmes and Bruce's Watson survive the transition to the mid-20th century as does the prolific Mary Gordon who played Holmes's housekeeper, Mrs Hudson. Rather like Neville Chamberlain, Watson's style of dress changes surprisingly little between the 1890s and 1940s, perhaps prompting Holmes's fond remark that he is "the one fixed point in a changing age".

On a practical level, the move to the 1940s ensured producers could reduce the budget, as there was no longer any need for period costumes or sets. Even better, the change ensured Holmes and Watson were now free to tackle all manner of topical enemies including Nazis, secret enemies and assorted

Above: Nigel Bruce, Evelyn Ankers and Basil Rathbone in Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror, in which Holmes exposes a secret Nazi agent and ends his campaign of sabotage.

Left: Sherlock Holmes in Washington, was an original screenplay, rather than something directly from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's back catalogue. Right: Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror used elements from a short story first published in The Strand Magazine.

fifth columnists head-on, enabling Holmes and Watson to finally take their rightful place as champions of the allied cause, dedicated to boosting morale and helping the war effort.

They did this first in Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror (1942). The film opens with the revelation that wartime Britain is being harried by a radio broadcaster who is delivering several eerily accurate and even prophetic radio broadcasts across the airwaves which are depressing popular morale on the British home front. Holmes himself is present when one such broadcast, which seems to accurately broadcast the sound of a train crash which has only occurred a few moments before, is heard by a secret organisation known as the Inner Council, listening to the radio.

"Germany broadcasting, Germany broadcasting!" the voice begins. "People of Britain, greetings from the Third Reich… Again, we bring you disaster, crushing humiliating disaster. It is folly to stand against the mighty wraith of the führer!" To any Briton watching, it would have been obvious that the Voice of Terror had been inspired by the real-life character of William Joyce, a one-time factotum of British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley, and better known as "Lord Haw-Haw" because of the upper-class accent in which he delivered his notorious pro-Nazi broadcasts.

The voice's "Germany broadcasting" opening directly echoed Joyce's own "Germany calling" catchphrase. In real life, Joyce would be captured and hanged for treason in 1946. In the film, Holmes exposes a secret Nazi agent and puts an end to his campaign of sabotage. The film ends with a patriotic homily from Holmes who foresees "an east wind". He goes on: "Such a wind as never blew on England yet. It will be cold and bitter, Watson. And a good many of us may wither before its blast. But it's God's own wind nonetheless, and a greener, better, stronger land will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared."

This final stirring piece of dialogue was, in fact, drawn directly from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes story His Last Bow. Conan Doyle had died in 1930 but had been writing in 1917 with a different war in mind.

A similar tone was adopted for the next film, Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (1943). This time, Holmes finds himself engaged in a battle with his old foe, Professor Moriarty (played by Lionel Atwill) who is in league with the Nazis to capture a top Swiss scientist who has developed a radical new invention, a bombsight, which will prove invaluable towards defeating Germany. The closing stages of the film see Holmes slightly misquoting the famous "this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, his England" speech from Shakespeare's Richard II. Earlier in the film, Holmes had disguised himself as an old German bookseller claiming: "I have some works by an old German writer, Wilhelm Shakespeare."

In April 1943, Universal released the next film in the series, Sherlock Holmes in Washington, now opting for an original screenplay, rather than something drawn directly from Conan Doyle's back catalogue. This time, the film ends with an enthusiastic endorsement of the Anglo-American alliance with Holmes, in a conversation with Watson, quoting Churchill directly: "That in the days to come the British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together in majesty, in justice and in peace."

Despite this, for the most part, a routine tale of spies and intrigue, is much less overtly propagandist in tone than the two films which had preceded it. The same is true of the six subsequent Rathbone-Bruce/Holmes-Watson films released before VJ Day in 1945. With the allied position largely improving from 1943 onwards, it seems to have been decided that this ingredient of the films was no longer considered essential towards helping the war effort.

The films nevertheless often continued to strike a fiercely patriotic note. In Sherlock Holmes Faces Death (1943), released less than a year after the Beveridge Report was published, Holmes rhapsodises optimistically about the possibilities for a postwar Britain. "There's a new spirit abroad in the land," Holmes says, almost as if he is quoting from the 1945 Labour general election manifesto. "The old days of grab and greed are on their way out. The time is coming, Watson, when we shan't be able to fill our bellies in comfort while other folk go hungry or sleep in warm beds while others shiver in the cold."

The 14th Rathbone-Bruce/Holmes-Watson mystery, Dressed to Kill, was released in June 1946. It would prove to be the final film in the series. One year on from the war's end, one thing was very clear indeed: Holmes and Watson had more than done their bit to help secure victory.

The Marvel at Much Marcle

Claire Saul visits a Herefordshire property with centuries of history, amazing stories, a major collection of privately owned art and a great green philosophy

Tucked in the Herefordshire countryside at Much Marcle, not far from its border with Gloucestershire, is Hellens Manor. Now presenting as a Tudor/Jacobean home, it predates those eras by some margin; the earliest known record shows that Harold Godwinson, later King Harold II, owned the estate in 1057. Hellens's long, tree-lined driveway Monk's Walk is a clue to the next inhabitants: Norman monks, who would troop along this route to the local church for mass each day.

One of the longest continuously occupied houses in Britain, there follows a rollcall of Hellens owners associated with some of the major names and events of British history.

Among them is Isolde Mortimer, whose steward Walter Helyon gave his name to the property. Isolde's brother Roger ordered the murder of King Edward II in 1327 and the delivery of the Great Seal of England to Isabella of France and the future King Edward III, at Hellens. Isolde's son James was educated with Edward III's eldest son, Edward the Black Prince. The prince stayed at Hellens in 1347, and today's visitors will be able to spot his three-feathered crest on the hooded stone fireplace in the atmospheric Stone Hall.

Top: The archway that welcomes visitors to Hellens at Much Marcle in Herefordshire. Left: One of Hellens' star exhibits claims to be the actual dressing box of Anne Boleyn.

Photograph: Claire Saul

Left: Queen Mary's Room is an interpretation of a room prepared for a visit by Mary Tudor. Right: Visitors will be able to spot the three-feathered crest of Edward the Black Prince, who stayed at Hellens in 1347, on the hooded stone fireplace in the atmospheric Stone Hall.

Queen Mary's Room is an interpretation of a room prepared for a visit by Mary Tudor. Hellens has many stories of hauntings, and most are recorded within these four walls. Could the sound of feet running across the room be the restless spirit of the elderly Catholic priest murdered in this spot, while trying to escape from roundheads during the civil war? One famous actor, when due to make an appearance at the Hay Festival, rather regretted his request to sleep in the room.

Among several stunning late Tudor and Stuart portraits in a nearby room is Henry Carey. His mother was Mary Boleyn, who preceded her sister Anne as the mistress of King Henry VIII. Was Henry Carey the king's illegitimate son? Historians do not necessarily agree on this but, regardless, it is through the Carey connection that items associated with Anne Boleyn are believed to have made their way to Hellens. Nearby is a portrait of Henry Carey's daughter, who holds a large comb, purported to have belonged to her great-aunt Anne Boleyn and one of the items from her dressing box. One of Hellens' star exhibits claims to be the actual dressing box.

Hellens was the seat of the Walwyn family for several generations. One of the most intriguing of the manor's many stories relates to Hetty Walwyn, who lived in the house in the early 18th century. She was incarcerated in the atmospheric bedroom now bearing her name, after eloping with her lover, John, a man of lesser social status. She was allowed to return to Hellens alone but was held in this room for the next 30 years. Regretful graffiti in the window glass, stating "It is a part of virtue to abstain/From what we love, if it shall prove our bane" is said to be by her hand. Intriguingly, graffiti in another hand stating "John Pearce, 1702" appears in the glass – on the outside.

Hellens' stories are fascinating but the property offers so much more to modern visitors. Art lovers, for example, will be agog with the vast collection of paintings adorning its walls, among them portraits by the likes of Van Dyck, Lely and Goya and works by Hogarth and Gainsborough. Nature lovers will enjoy the flora and fauna of beautiful gardens and ancient woodlands. Chess lovers can take on the challenge of playing with four sets of pieces on the board in the Music Room. Cake lovers can feast on the home baked treats in the tearoom.

"Hellens has been a place of refuge and retreat for centuries, welcoming those in need of peace and beauty and providing space for artists, thinkers and creatives," says Sash Giles, general manager of Hellens. "We support and encourage access to nature and the environment through initiatives such as Back 2 the Wild and Wild Tots, supporting children and young people to spend time in the outdoors.

"Regeneration of our land has seen increasing numbers of songbirds and plant and insect diversity. Each year we welcome visitors to our Hellensmusic Festival, our Garden Festival, Big Apple weekend and our monthly produce market, providing cultural experiences and a focus for community in rural Herefordshire."

Plans have recently been approved for the development of an innovative new gallery in the grounds to showcase the property's fabulous collection of paintings and works on paper. While sharing the eclectic stories of its past, Hellens' eyes look to the future, too.

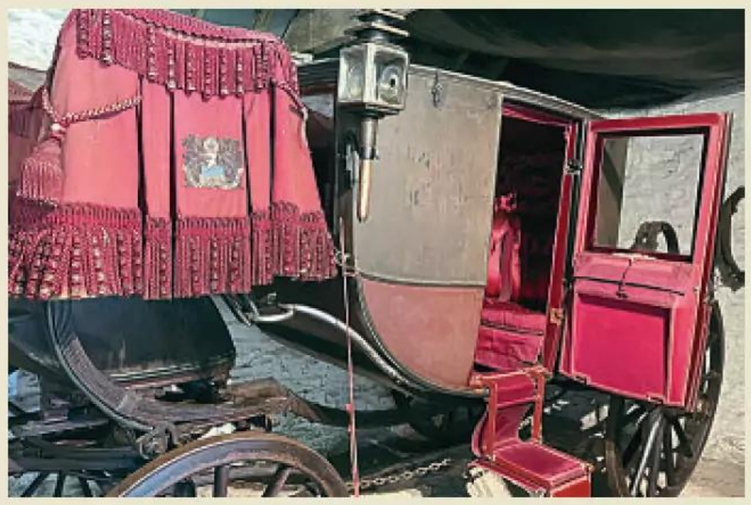
Hellens Manor, Much Marcle, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2LY (01531 660504, hellensmanor.com) Open Wednesdays, Sundays and bank holidays until 15 October, 10.30am-5pm. House visits are by guided tour which must be booked online. Admission to the grounds, gardens and tearoom is free.

Manor Must Sees

The walls of the Cordova room: lined with decorated 19th century Spanish wall coverings, made of leather.

The Coach House: inspect the impressive, high-status 1860 dress coach featuring a vibrant pink silk interior, considered to be the finest of its kind in the country. The coach bears the crest of the Munthe family which purchased Hellens in 1943 and whose descendants still own the house today. Also here is a cabriolet carriage dating to c1880 and a wagonette, a type of sporting vehicle popular during the late 19th century. Do also check out the apple press next door.

The dovecote in the Physic Garden: a rare, octagonal design. It was built by Fulke Walwyn and his wife Margaret, whose initials can be seen above the 1641 completion date on the brickwork.



The 1860 dress coach has a vibrant pink silk interior and bears the crest of the Munthe family who purchased Hellens in 1943.

BEST OF BRITISH
puzzle page

Twenty Questions

How well do you know Britain – Past and Present? Test your knowledge with our July quiz

1. Which paperback book publishing company was founded by Allen Lane on 30 July 1935?
2. Who played Darth Vader in the original Star Wars trilogy?
3. Which star of The Comedians was the original host of the game show Catchphrase?
4. Who played Thelma in The Likely Lads and Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?
5. Which radio station was launched on 29 July 1945 as a domestic replacement for the BBC General Forces Programme?
6. Who played Jeffrey Fairbrother in the first five series of Hi-de-Hi!?
7. Which member of Erasure was previously in groups including Depeche Mode, Yazoo and the Assembly?
8. Which well-known author also writes under the alias Robert Galbraith?
9. Who was the principal conductor of the Hallé orchestra from 1943 to 1970?
10. Who is the longest-serving female presenter of Blue Peter?
11. Who played the cook and housekeeper Mrs Hall in the BBC version of All Creatures Great and Small?
12. Which illustrator created the character of Dan Dare?
13. Which German-owned supermarket chain opened its first British store on 17 July 1990 in Birmingham?
14. Who directed television plays including Scum, Made in Britain, Penda's Fen and The Firm?
15. Who wrote songs for the Shadows including Wonderful Land and Apache?
16. Who was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980 to 1991?
17. Who had a 1967 No 1 single with Let the Heartaches Begin?
18. Who won the World Snooker Championship in 1972 and 1982?
19. Who was the BBC's leading horse racing commentator from 1947 to 1997?
20. Who, until her death on 26 July 2020, was the oldest living and earliest surviving Academy Award winner?

And I quote…

Who did Ronald Bergan of The Guardian call: "One of the most beautiful, energetic, and spirited actresses in the history of British cinema?"

Dialect Detective

Britain has many wonderful regional dialects. Can you spot the correct definition for each of these examples?

1. Zirmila (*Exmoor*)
a) A scythe
b) A sow
c) A son-in-law

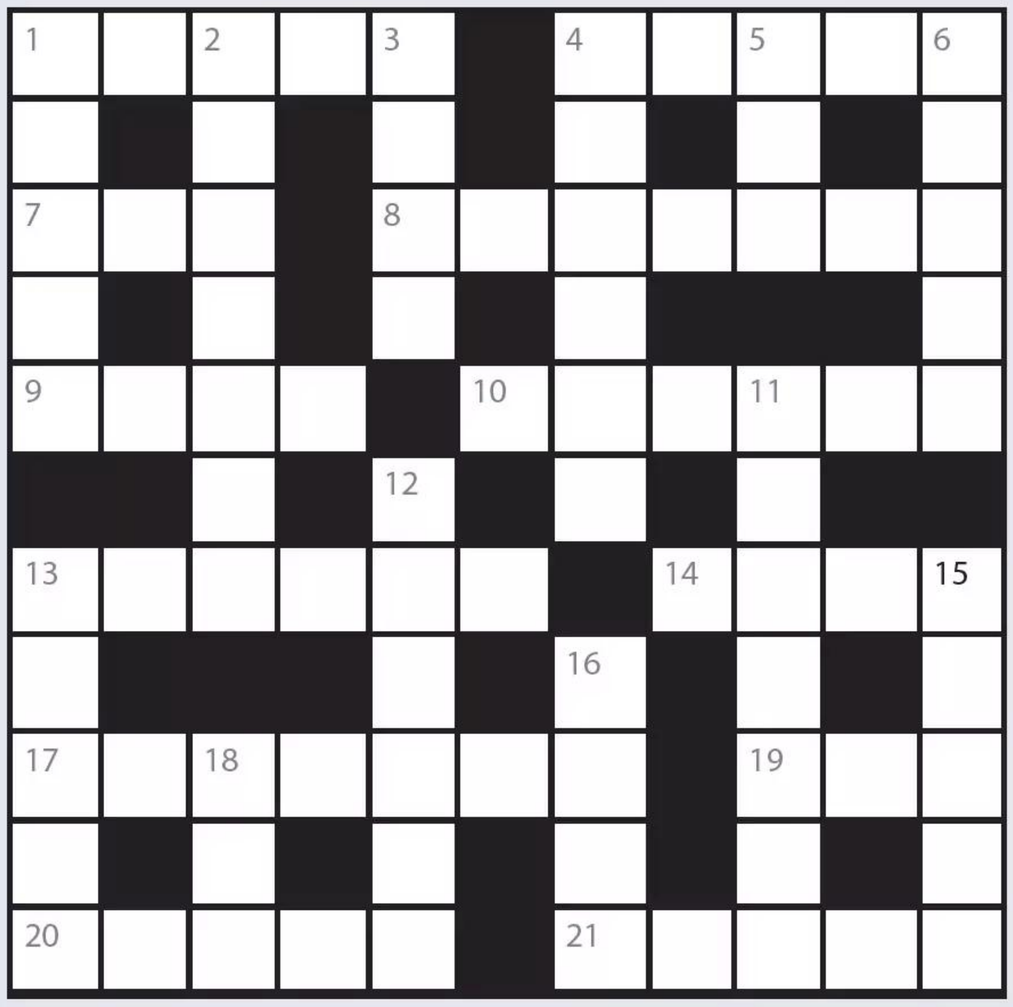
2. Kedger (*Yorkshire*)
a) A fisherman
b) A great coat
c) A grain of wheat

3. Delf (*Norfolk/Suffolk*)
a) A deep ditch or drain
b) A mousetrap
c) A woodpecker

4. Gaul (*Lancashire*)
a) A gallon
b) A lever
c) A good many

Cryptic Crossword

Compiled by CADOC



Across

1. See 4 Down
4 and 3 Down. Secombe say and Emil upset, played by Orson Welles (5,4)
7. Easily overtake Linford and Paula at first (3)
8. Terrible riot after my French? I was one at school (7)
9. Nips back to find a feature of 17 Across (4)
10. Starmer, for example, and ref return to find a likely lad (6)
13. It's only the sound of actress Jane – wearing a slinky dress? (6)
14. Stoves using a fuel for instance (4)
17. But Lancashire bowlers send them down too... (7)
19. ...and it's an attempt by Widnes to score one (3)
20. Jaguar that's included in society perk (1,4)
21. Not found dozing at a final celebration (5)

Down

1 and 13 Down. Broken down lorry close to posh car (5,5)
2. Youth leader at university with pastries? They thought they were going places (7)
3. See 4 Across
4, 1 Across and 11 Down. The great yearly loan badly needed for messing about in boats (6,5,7)
5. With Tommy at the front it's absolute rubbish (3)
6. Army presence incorporating famous battle site (5)
11. See 4 Down
12. Almost select when moving to east to find Basil, so to speak (6)
13. See 1 Down
15. The panache that Lonnie Donegan was once putting on (5)
16. Sail around to discover St John (4)
18. Cowboy Rogers – was he trigger-happy? (3)

What is it?

For chopping chops

The solutions to this month's puzzles are on page 80

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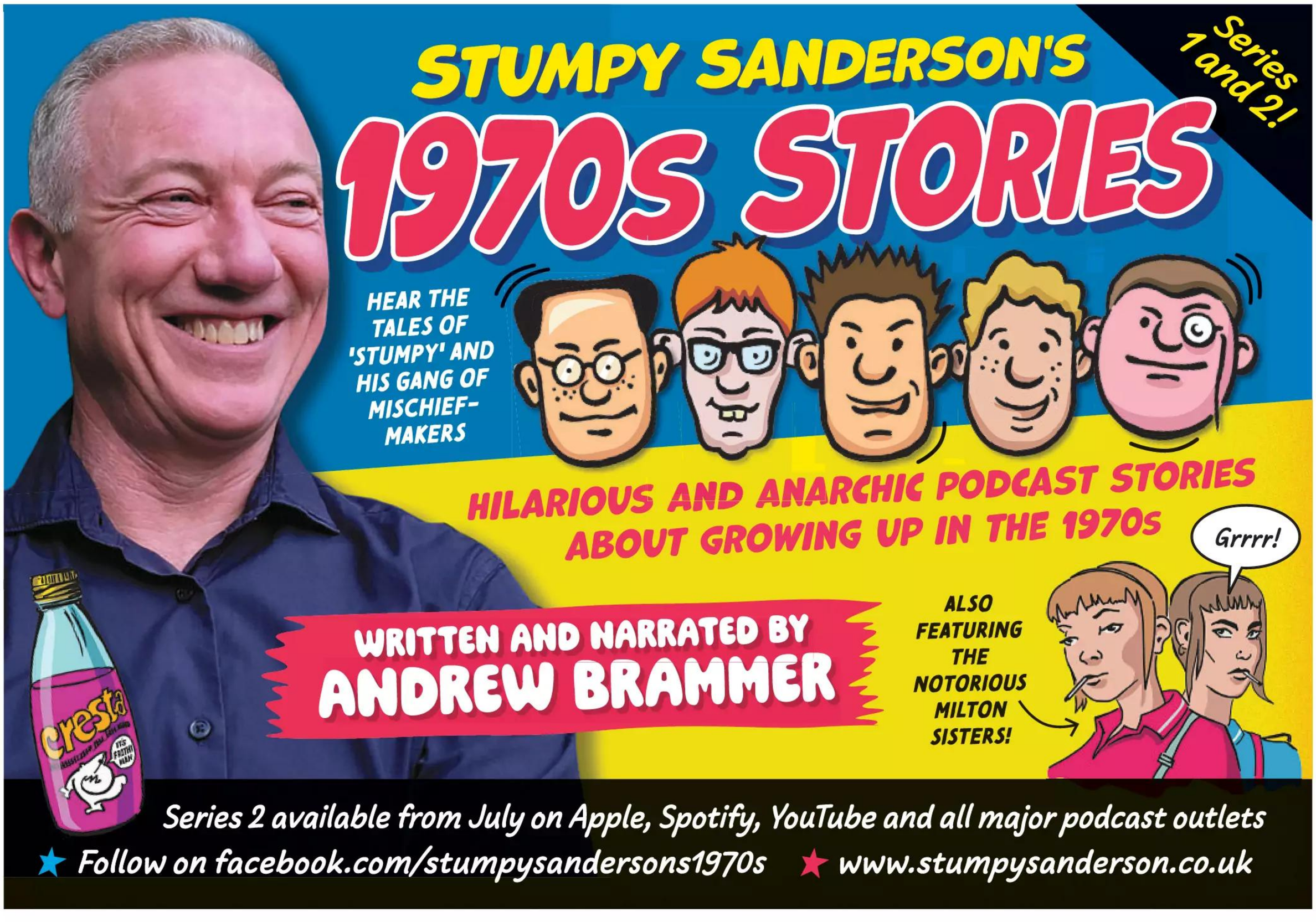

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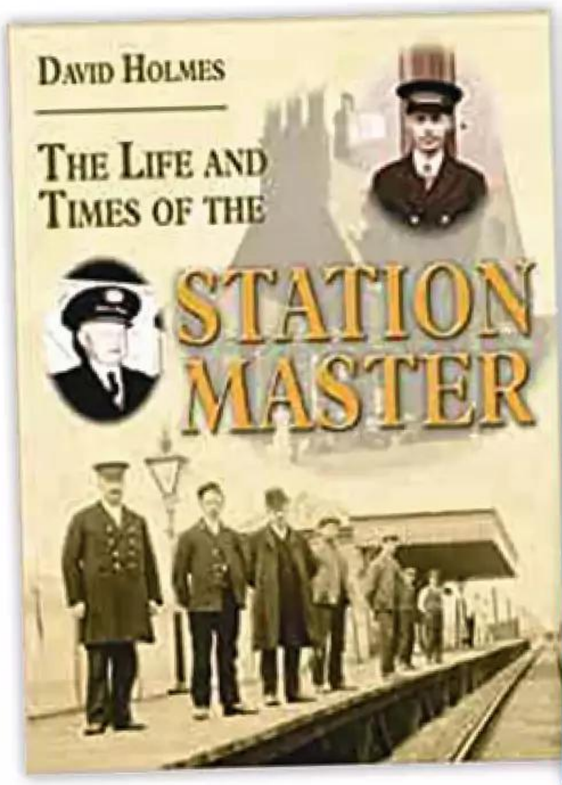

WHAT OUR READERS SAY ABOUT *BEST OF BRITISH*

★★★★★

Excellent variety of nostalgia, information and illustrations – my favourite magazine in fact.
MR C KENNETT, DUNSTABLE

★★★★★

The range of topics covered in the magazine never ceases to amaze me. Keep it up.
PETER J GASKIN, IPSWICH

★★★★★

I have been reading your great mag for years, keep up the great work.
RAY GRIFFITHS, GRIMSBY

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THE UK's TOP NOSTALGIA MONTHLY

BEST OF BRITISH

PAST AND PRESENT

SIMON STABLER, EDITOR

Best of British is the UK's premier nostalgia magazine, covering every aspect of life from the 1930s to today. Packed with features that celebrate classic entertainment, transport, food and drink, and more, not to mention Postbag and the Yesterday Remembered memoir section, a subscription to Best of British is always going to be great value.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ BEST OF BRITISH EVERY MONTH

» Interviews with the stars of classic TV, film and music » A lively Postbag and Yesterday Remembered section » Images and memories from The Francis Frith Collection » Plan great days out with Postcard from... and Out & About » Guess the values of our Treasures in the Attic » A trip down memory lane

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Bookshelf

David Brown checks out the latest releases

BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Design and Lifestyle of Concorde
By Lawrence Azerrad, Prestel, hardback, £35

The inspirational appearance of the Anglo-French developed Concorde, in the late 1960s, offered a glimpse of the future at a time when a creative boost was very much needed.

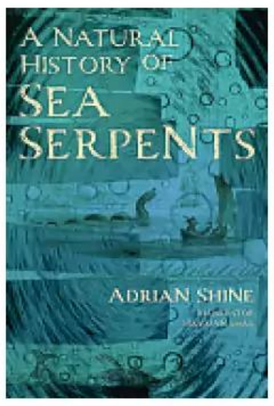
That unmistakable outline with the delta wings and distinctive nose made it instantly recognisable. Powered by 38,000 pounds of thrust, it could cross the Atlantic in a little under three hours.

Embodied within a compact space, this amazing mix of technology and design offered a luxurious way to travel for those who could afford it. Many could and were happy to be seen as part of the supersonic set.

One of the creative team of designers involved with the interiors was the late Sir Terence Conran, who wrote in his foreword: "I can honestly say that this is the most beautiful and exhilarating man-made object I have ever seen."

The approach of this book by creative director, author and curator Lawrence Azerrad centres around his marvellous collection of more 1,000 Concorde-related objects, from evocative ephemera to superb cutlery (the on-board crew must have been busy keeping an eye on such movable pieces of art).

In 2003, Concorde seemed to disappear almost as quickly as it had first been introduced, leaving us with a relatively short, but memorable chapter in aviation history. Today it is possible to walk through grounded examples of Concorde and studying all the various objects shown here helps bring to life what it must have been like to experience the incredible lifestyle leap it represented.



A Natural History of Sea Serpents
By Adrian Shine, Whittles Publishing, paperback, £18.99

Those of us who have ever stopped and considered what a sea serpent might look like, our imaginations, perhaps spurred on by a drawing in the corner of an ancient maritime chart, can be glad that Adrian Shine takes the subject seriously.

His study takes into account more than 100 sea serpent and associated maritime monster reports that have accumulated over three centuries. Many natural history experts at best have been sceptical about the possible existence of such creatures, while others openly mock all those sightings.

The author of this fascinating volume declares his relationship to one creature in particular, the legendary Loch Ness Monster (LNM), to be categorised as "sympathetic scepticism". He has certainly studied the LNM in depth (if you'll excuse the pun). He was the author, designer and curator of the exhibition at the Loch Ness Centre, Drumnadrochit, and believes that such observations offer radical interpretations of what people have seen. There could be more to it than an annual silly-season tabloid story.

For example, there was a serpent seen by hundreds off the New England Coast in 1817, while two zoologists described an unusual creature they saw in 1904.

Sometimes, science has subsequently proven misgivings about some sightings, such as upturned, dead whales, but as the seas are so vast, who can be really sure what might be out there?

For those looking to study the subject further, there is a thorough bibliography and index, while the selection of illustrations included is equally inspiring.

Triumph Herald
By Colin Lindsay, Amberley, paperback, £15.99

A lot of motorists were pleasantly surprised when the Triumph Herald appeared on the scene in 1959. Here was a modern-looking car compared with what people were used to when the Standard car company name was mentioned.

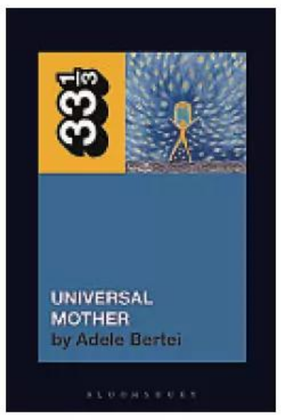
The previous models' heavy, curved designs belonged in the past, while this Giovanni Michelotti penned stunner was a contemporary player (his original Project Zobo drawing – reproduced in the book – was even better).

It didn't initially have a very powerful engine, but it was not chunky and all that glass and those clean lines was good news indeed. There were some strong single colour versions while two-colour options won over more converts.

The Herald did achieve some strong rally successes via some clever engine performance tweaks. If there was a snag, it was the use of a separate body and chassis at a time when monocoque construction was showing progress with other manufacturers.

The original saloon was subsequently joined by a coupe, convertible (still seen as desirable by many classic fans) and estate. The latter was seen as a five-seater family vehicle, more useful for going on a picnic, than as a trade load shifter.

Go to any classic car meet, and the arrival of a colourful Triumph Herald continues to raise smiles. If you'd like your own, Colin Lindsay offers some sound advice on what to look out for, and, unfortunately, there are lots of things to consider. Reading this enthusiastic, handy book is a good place to start.



Sinead O'Connor's Universal Mother
By Adele Bertei, Bloomsbury Academic, paperback, £9.99

Sinead O'Connor's fourth album, Universal Mother, was released in September 1994 and represented a development away from earlier releases with some mainly piano-based, atmospheric music that was less rage-based, but nonetheless hard-hitting in its scope and overall message. Easy listening it was not.

The stark reality of her outpourings about motherhood bad and good, abuse and pain, spirituality and injustice, was something some listeners struggled to get along with, while others took it to heart and loved the no-holds-barred lyrics. It reached No 11 in the UK album chart and gained a gold disc for its sales.

The album opens with a spoken word piece on feminism by Germaine Greer. There are songs reflecting on O'Connor's own role as a mother in addition to reflections on her estranged mother beating her as a child. The song Famine is about another mother figure, Mother Ireland and the Great Famine, that incorporates lyrics from the Beatles' Eleanor Rigby and various other musical samples.

In this, the 191st volume of the 33 1/3 series of album studies, Adele Bertei reveals deep thoughts on the artist, her inner turmoils and beliefs, and the need to bare her soul through her songs.

While Adele was writing this book in July 2023, she heard the news that Sinead had died. The author believes that she died of a broken heart. "Sinead lived our collective suffering in song", she says in her epilogue.

Running Away
By Marcus Harris, Pegasus Elliott Mackenzie Publishers Ltd, paperback, £12.99

In times of trouble, we may all have thought of not getting off at our home stop on the commute home, but is there any real hope or point in escaping to somewhere else?

In the words of a Tom Petty song: "Even the losers get lucky sometime." That may be true in certain circumstances, but whichever way you look at things in the eyes of John Thompson, "JT", can things only get worse.

We can't refer to him as the "hero" of this story, central figure yes, but he's been a bad boy and is clutching at straws for his continued survival as problems pile up and there appears to further darkness around every corner.

Standing still is not an option, he has got in serious debt with some people who won't accept apologies for not paying up, villains who dish out punishment without mercy.

So, instead of leaving the train at Swindon, "JT" continues to the West Country, with no great plans as to what he will do when he gets there, believing only that putting distance between him and his pursuers can at least temporarily be to his advantage.

Can things get any worse for him? Soon he discovers that he is also in the frame for a murder and that police officers are looking for him.

It's a breathless plot, written by Marcus Harris, who some will remember from his role as Julian in the ITV The Famous Five series in the 1970s. The action is a big step away from Blyton japes, but it's a promising first novel.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

The Chelsea Detective: Series 3
DVD and digital, Acorn Media International, AV3819

The dark side of life in trendy Chelsea is revisited in Series 3 of The Chelsea Detective as DI Max Arnold faces up to a fresh set of crimes, all set within a knife's throw of the River Thames.

Adrian Scarborough deftly steps back into the persona of the affable DI, with Vanessa Emme reprising the role of DS Layla Walsh, who tries to keep him focused, plus Sophie Stone as pathologist Ashley Wilton, who finds humour in some of his actions and habits.

Frances Barber returns as Max's meddling Aunt Olivia, while Anamaria Marinca as his estranged wife, Astrid, still searches for potential common ground. Meanwhile, our hero does try dating, only to see his wife in the pub where he meets a new love interest.

An interesting appearance is that of Alex Kingston as the US ambassador in a complicated plot involving the discovery of two separate graves on a seemingly peaceful allotment.

All four 90-minute episodes feature murders, with the victims including an antiques dealer, climate scientist and a former pop star.

One special scene is when our cycling DI pursues a car by using parallel lanes to the main road, only to be frustrated by a barrier. Fortunately, Max knows how to use the zoom facility on the camera of his mobile phone to good effect.

Another very watchable series. Also available is a six-disc DVD collection of series 1-3.

The Madame Blanc Mysteries Series 4
DVD and digital, Acorn Media International, AV3815

The sun always seems to shine on the French town of Sainte Victoire, but this can mask some dastardly crimes including grisly deaths taking place in the shadows. Would-be villains should know better than trying their attempts at deception, theft and murder when "Madame Blanc" and her friends are around. Justice will surely catch up with them.

The fourth series of this cosiest of cosy drama series includes cliffhanger moments other than the central crime plots. For example, will antiques dealer Jean White (Sally Lindsay) and taxi-driver Dom (Steve Edge) be able to keep their blossoming romance a secret from their close friends?

Other popular characters to return in this series include Sue Vincent as mechanic Gloria, Tony Robinson as a bartender Uncle Patrick (a man with a past), together will well-heeled couple Jeremy (Robin Askwith) and Judith (Sue Holderness). All of whom, when not helping to wrong rights and solve crimes, spend a lot of time socialising inside and outside bars. The exception to this rule is the ever-serious police chief Caron (Alex Gaumond), who is left to tie up all the loose ends, while the others celebrate.

In addition to the double DVD release of Series 4, an eight-disc DVD box set of series 1-4 now available.

OUT&ABOUT

Places to go, people to see

Horrible Histories: Barmy Britain – The Best Bits!

Get ready to laugh, learn and squirm through Britain's barmiest history.

The funniest, fearsome and most farcical facts from history return to the West End stage from 31 July. Running until 31 August at London's Apollo Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue, Horrible Histories: Barmy Britain – The Best Bits! is a non-stop romp through Britain's remarkable history. From Boudicca's battles to the notorious nightsoil men, get ready to laugh, learn and squirm through Britain's barmiest history. Will you survive the plague, stand and deliver to dastardly Dick Turpin, or escape the clutches of Burke and Hare? It's a wild ride through the past that's packed with facts, fun, and fabulous figures.
0330 333 4809, barmybritain.com

Dave Myers: A Barrow Lad

An exhibition celebrating the life of Hairy Biker Dave Myers has opened at the Dock Museum in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Running until 5 October, Dave Myers: A Barrow Lad takes visitors on a journey through Dave's life from his early days in Barrow to becoming one half of TV personalities the Hairy Bikers. On show are some of Dave's most personal and recognisable possessions such as his crash helmet, his shirts, Strictly Come Dancing dance shoes, his mum's pie dish and more. The exhibition will also look at Dave's previous and well-established career as a make-up artist, working on shows such as Top of the Pops – where he painted the white stripe on Adam Ant's face – The Generation Game, Spooks and The Life and Times of a She Devil. It was while working on the Catherine Cookson TV drama The Gambling man that he first met fellow Hairy Biker, Si King.
01229 876400, dockmuseum.org.uk

The exhibition showcases items donated by Dave's widow, Lilliana Myers, with his motorcycle kit being among the most prized items.

Sea State

A historic house has opened to the public for the first time in a generation with a contemporary art exhibition, a new art commission and artist residencies. The inaugural exhibition at Wolterton – an 18th century Palladian Hall and 500-acre estate, located in north Norfolk – Sea State features new work by Maggi Hambling and Ro Robertson in response to humanity's enduring, complex, and increasingly precarious relationship with the ocean. Hambling, celebrated for her continuing series of North Sea paintings, also presents two new works: Summer Wave Breaking II and Wall of Water XXVII, while Ro Robertson's new site-specific sculptural work, The Swell, is a two-metre-tall painted steel structure composed of three welded forms. Running until 7 September, Sea State is part of an arts and culture programme that is also hosting Clay Research Group, a Norwich-based artists' collective of lecturers, potters, and researchers dedicated to exploring locally sourced ceramic materials.
01263 768966, wolterton.co.uk

First shown at the National Gallery, Wall of Water XXVII is a recent work by Maggi Hambling, one of Britain's foremost artists.

Photograph: (Horrible Histories) Ian Tilton

NOT TO BE MISSED

VE Day Recollections

(Until 03 August)
Exploring local recollections and memories of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two and subsequent VE Day anniversary celebrations.
North Down Museum, Bangor, County Down
028 9127 1200, andculture.org.uk

Brickwrecks: Sunken Ships in LEGO® Bricks

(Until 31 August)
Explore the tales of shipwrecks through intricate, large-scale LEGO® models designed by Ryan "The Brickman" McNaught.
The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent
01634 823800, thedockyard.co.uk

Popping to the Shops: Saffron Lane

(Until 31 August)
Telling a history of Leicester's Saffron Lane in the words of the people who live and work in the area. Businesses at the heart of this exhibition told their stories and donated new objects that are representative of recent retail activity along Saffron Lane.
Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, Leicestershire
0116 225 4900, leicestermuseums.org/leicester-museum-art-gallery

IKEA: Magical Patterns

(18 July - 17 January)
Showcasing IKEA's rich design history with 180 original fabrics spanning six decades of design innovation. The exhibition delves into how the retailer has supported experimental designers, from the revolutionary 10-gruppen collective to collaborations with icons such as Zandra Rhodes and Marimekko.
Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh
0131 550 3660, dovecotstudios.com

Austen and Turner: A Country House Encounter

(Until 19 October)
An exhibition celebrating the 250th anniversaries of the landscape painter JMW Turner and novelist Jane Austen. For the very first time, the work of these two legendary artistic figures will be brought together, while contemporary art and creative writing bring a fresh perspective on how Turner's and Austen's work continues to shape our views of the country house today.
Harewood House, Leeds, West Yorkshire
0113 218 1000, harewood.org

Operation Varsity: Crossing Time

(Until 27 July)
A collaborative project between Outside In, working to open up the art world to people who face barriers to it, The Veterans Foundation, and the museum. Featuring artwork inspired by veterans, with veterans and serving members of the armed forces among those curating it, the exhibition marks 80 years since Operation Varsity, the largest single-day airborne operation in history.
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, Oxfordshire
01993 810210, sofo.org.uk

ATTRACTION OF THE MONTH

The Amazing NOVELTY-ORIUM & Mechanical Museum

A unique collection of fully restored vintage automatons, puppet shows, entertainment machines and a variety of "olde-tyme" amusements including The Haunted House, 1930s countertop coin-operated pinball games, Illusion-O – the amazing fortune telling robot, and a selection of vintage Mutoscopes and viewers. Also featured is an optical illusion gallery, featuring push-button illusions, holograms, perplexing puzzles and distorting mirrors.

What to eat: Located in The Concourse Shopping Centre, there are several food and drink outlets available including Siesta Coffee, The Viking Pub, KFC, The Coffee House and Subway.

Disabled access: Wheelchair accessible, with lift access to first floor where the attraction is based. Accessible toilets are available in the centre.

How to get there: A short drive from junction 4 of the M58, parking is free for up to five hours. Less than a minute's walk from the shopping centre bus station (0871 200 2233, traveline.info).

Opening times and admission: Open Wednesday to Saturday (plus Monday and Tuesday during local school holidays) 11am-5.30pm, and Sunday, 11am-3.30pm. Admission is free with old penny tokens available to purchase from the counter or change machines to operate the many exhibits on display.

Restored vintage fortune tellers and "prize-every-time" animated vendors operate on current £1 coins, while tokens for the Auto-Gift – a vending machine with small prizes contained within miniature cardboard boxes – are available to purchase from the counter.

The Amazing Novelty-Orium & Mechanical Museum, Unit 143, The Concourse Shopping Centre, Southway, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6HB (vintagenoveltyamusements.co.uk/the-novelty-orium)

DIARY DATES
GREAT BRITISH EVENTS

SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND
Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Channel Islands

SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND AND LONDON
Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Isle of Wight

WEST OF ENGLAND
Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire

EAST OF ENGLAND
Cambridgeshire, Essex, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk

MIDLANDS
Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Staffordshire, Warwickshire

NORTH OF ENGLAND
Cheshire, County Durham, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire, Isle of Man

WALES

SCOTLAND

NORTHERN IRELAND

SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

04-05 SWINDON BALLOON FESTIVAL
With up to 35 hot-air balloons on display, the event promises a weekend of family fun, including arena entertainment, circus workshop, living history villages, and birds of prey stand.
Lydiard House Museum, Swindon, Wiltshire
01793 464644, lydiardpark.org.uk

12-13 OUT OF THIS WORLD: SCI-FI WEEKEND
Meet some of your favourite sci-fi characters around the station and onboard. Children in sci-fi fancy dress travel free. Trains depart at 10.45am, noon, 1.15pm, 2.30pm and 3.45pm.
Avon Valley Railway, Bitton, Bristol
0117 932 5538, avonvalleyrailway.org

15-16 LIVING HISTORY CAMP (10.30AM-2PM)
Living history volunteers will be bringing the English civil war to life with a pop-up camp, including live musket-firing and weapon demonstrations. No booking required.
Dunster Castle and Watermill, Dunster, Minehead, Somerset
01643 821314, nationaltrust.org.uk/dunster-castle-and-watermill

20 CLOVELLY MARITIME FESTIVAL (10AM-5PM)
Enjoy workshops, children's face-painting and browse a variety of stalls offering food and event-themed arts and crafts. Under-16s in maritime-themed fancy dress receive free entry.
Clovelly Harbour, near Bideford, Devon
01237 431781, clovelly.co.uk

26-27 FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2025 (10AM-5PM)
A showground of living history, archaeology, talks, fun and entertainment. No booking required.
The Salisbury Museum, Salisbury, Wiltshire
01722 332151,
salisburymuseum.org.uk

SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND AND LONDON

05-06 FIRE ENGINE RALLY
See the museum filled with fire engines from the turn of the last century through to the present day. Demonstrations include a rescue from the saw pit and a railway station fire.
Rural Life Living Museum, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey
01252 795571, rural-life.org.uk

11 DEPOT DISCOVERY TOURS (11AM-1PM, 2-4PM)
Discover the history of London Transport with a tour around the depot to see highlights from the collection including vehicles, signs, maps and some unusual items. Booking essential.
London Transport Museum, Acton Depot, London
0343 222 5000, ltmuseum.co.uk

18-20 K&ESR DIESEL GALA
Join in the festivities as the railway celebrates everything diesel. A heritage bus service will also be in operation, providing a mainline connection
Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent
01580 765155, kesr.org.uk

26 SUMMER AIR SHOW 2025 (9AM-9PM)
Experience breathtaking displays of both visiting and collection aircraft, explore the extensive collection of vehicles and aircraft, and take a stroll through the Regency Garden.
Shuttleworth, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire
01767 627927, shuttleworth.org

27 1960s DAY (10AM-4.30PM)
From vintage vehicles and household items to music and games, be transported back in time to the era of the space race and flower power. Booking requested.
Amberley Museum, Near Arundel, West Sussex
01798 831370, amberleymuseum.co.uk

WEST OF ENGLAND

05-06 RAILWAY 200: TRAINS THROUGH THE AGES (9AM-7PM)
Showcasing trains through the ages with a busy timetable of trains, the opportunity to visit the Railway 200 Exhibition Train, and attractions along the line.
Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster, Worcestershire
01562 757900, svr.co.uk

11 WILD HISTORY WALK (1.30-3.30PM)
Join a two-hour walk and find out why Sir Peter Scott chose Slimbridge to be the birthplace of modern conservation, followed by cream tea in the Kingfisher Kitchen. Booking essential.
WWT Slimbridge, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
01453 891900, wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge

19 FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2025 (11AM-4PM)
Join the Really Roman day for all the family and take part in a range of exciting, free activities and tours across the museum and its galleries. Free, drop-in activities for all ages.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Oxfordshire
01865 278000, ashmolean.org

20 FREE HERITAGE BUS RIDES
Free buses will depart Oxford Bus Museum at 12.15pm and 2.15pm. Browse buses, Morris motors and historic cycles in the museum and enjoy freshly made sandwiches in the cafe.
Oxford Bus Museum, Long Hanborough, Witney, Oxfordshire
01993 883617, oxfordbusmuseum.org

26-27 STEAM IN MINIATURE (10AM-4PM)
Miniature steam engines roam around the town, giving an idea of what life would have been like for Victorian residents. No booking needed.
Blists Hill Victorian Town, Telford, Shropshire
01952 433424, ironbridge.org.uk

EAST OF ENGLAND

05-06 MAIL BY RAIL
Ride aboard the Travelling Post Office train, witness mailbag exchanges from trackside, and try your hand at sorting letters on the move – just as real postal workers once did.
Nene Valley Railway, Stibbington, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
01780 784444, nvr.org.uk

12-13 SEASIDE SPECIAL (11AM)
Featuring Parravani's Ice Cream, Punch and Judy show, the RNLI and Coastguard. Plus, free park and ride courtesy of First Bus.
East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk
01502 518459, eatm.co.uk

19-20 THE AMIGA AT 40
Join in a weekend of celebrating all things Amiga. Get hands-on with machines from

across the Amiga timeline along with some of its most beloved software. No need to book.
The Centre for Computing History, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
01223 214446, computinghistory.org.uk

26-27 FIRE ENGINE RALLY

A vibrant celebration of firefighting history, featuring an array of vintage and modern fire engines from across the UK. A chance to explore the evolution of firefighting technology.
Bressingham Steam & Gardens, Diss, Norfolk
01379 686900, bressingham.co.uk

MIDLANDS

05 RAILWAY DAY WITH MECCANO (11.30AM-4.30PM)

Enjoy a ride on steam locomotive Leonard as Meccano modellers of all ages get busy. Train rides cost 50p. Free entry to museum and grounds. Cafe open for light refreshments.
Abbey Pumping Station, Leicester, Leicestershire
0116 299 5111, leicestermuseums.org/abbey-pumping-station

12-13 THE FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

Perfect for garden enthusiasts, families, and anyone seeking a magical day out in nature, this unmissable event is packed with inspiration, beauty, and fun for all ages.
Belvoir Castle, Grantham, Leicestershire
01476 871001, belvoircastle.com

18 DIESEL RAILCAR DAY

Join one of the highest mileage diesel-hauled services in preservation.
Great Central Railway, Loughborough, Leicestershire
01509 632323, gcrailway.co.uk

20 ROOTES HERITAGE DAY (10AM-4PM)

Celebrating all kinds of classics whether earlier Hillmans, Humbers, Sunbeams and Singers or the later Chryslers, Simca and Talbots.
British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwick, Warwickshire
01926 895295, britishmotormuseum.co.uk

26-27 ROMAN AROUND – LIVING HISTORY WEEKEND (10AM-4PM)

Batavi re-enactment group will be camped on site and covering a whole manner of everyday Roman life experiences from home and family life to exploring the life of a Roman soldier.
Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Nuneaton, Warwickshire
01455 290429, bosworthbattlefield.org.uk

NORTH OF ENGLAND

05-06 DIESEL GALA

Making a triumphant return after an eight-year hiatus is the one-of-a-kind Consett No 10 and joining the lineup are home fleet favourites ex-British Rail locomotives 03078 and 08915.
Stephenson Steam Railway, North Shields, Tyne & Wear
0191 277 7135, stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk

12-13 CHESHIRE STEAM FAIR

A full programme of attractions including steam engines, classic cars and motorcycles, vintage tractors and commercials, fairground organs, and miniature steam engines.
Daresbury, Warrington, Cheshire
01751 200839, outdoorshows.co.uk

19 BARROW FESTIVAL OF TRANSPORT (10AM-4.30PM)

Featuring classic, vintage and modern cars and motorcycles, funfair rides, ride-on vehicles, exhibitor arenas, street entertainers and a live stage.
Town centre, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
festivaloftransport.co.uk

27 THE SANDTOFT GATHERING 2025 (10AM-5.30PM)

All the usual attractions, plus real ale beer tent; displays of vintage cars, buses, and motorcycles; additional tours of the local area, using vintage buses; a transport flea market.
Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, Doncaster, South Yorkshire
01724 711846, sandtoft.org/wp

31 ATTIC TOUR (11AM, 12.30PM)

A rare opportunity to ascend into the attics, now a trove of collections as well as an evocative glimpse of times gone by. Includes entry to grounds and gardens. Booking essential.
Harewood House, Leeds, West Yorkshire
0113 218 1000, harewood.org

WALES

05-06 MODEL RAILWAY SHOW (11AM-4PM)

The in-house model railway club's layouts will be in operation along with a range of visiting layouts of all scales and sizes. The railway will be running a heritage steam train.
Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway, Blaenavon, Pontypool, Monmouthshire
01495 792263, bhrailway.co.uk

12 CELEBRATION OF NATURE (10AM-4PM)

Amgueddfa Cymru scientists will be on hand to give you a glimpse into the diversity of life in the woodlands and gardens of St Fagans. Free event.
St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff
0300 111 2 333, museum.wales/stfagans

19-20 CASTLE GARRISON AND RED DRAGON ARCHERS (11AM-3PM)

Join the Castle Garrison and Red Dragon Archers for activities and fun. Different activities both days, some of which are weather dependant. No booking required.
Castell Caernarfon, Caernarfon, Gwynedd
0300 025 2239, cadw.gov.wales

21-24 ROYAL WELSH SHOW

Activities include forestry, horticulture, crafts, countryside sports, shopping, food and drink and a 12-hour programme each day of exciting entertainment, attractions and displays.
Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, Powys
01982 553683, rwas.wales/royal-welsh

SCOTLAND

05-06 50TH ANNIVERSARY FREE WEEKEND (10AM-5PM)

Celebrate the museum's 50th birthday, explore the collections and learn about the airfield. Free but booking required.
National Museum of Flight, East Fortune Airfield, East Lothian
0300 123 6789, nms.ac.uk

12-13 49TH SCOTTISH TRANSPORT EXTRAVAGANZA (9AM-5PM)

This premier vintage motoring spectacular put together by Strathmore Vintage Vehicle Club brings together more than 1,700 veteran, vintage and classic vehicles and machinery.
Glamis Castle, Forfar, Angus
01307 840393, glamis-castle.co.uk

20 SCOTTISH FESTIVAL OF MOTORING

Featuring a variety of cars, trucks and motorcycles and so much more including daring stunts, passenger experiences, music, exhibitions, trade village, and activities for children.
Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh
0131 335 6200, festivalofmotoring.co.uk

26-27 SPECTACULAR JOUSTING (CAERLAVEROCK) (11AM-4PM)

This premier vintage motoring spectacular put together by Strathmore Vintage Vehicle Club brings together more than 1,700 veteran, vintage and classic vehicles and machinery"
Caerlaverock Castle, Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway
0131 668 8885, historicenvironment.scot

27 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DAY (11AM-4.30PM)

Experience new attractions at no extra cost including the three-screen, high-tech bus-driving experience that tilts as you brake and rocks as you roll around corners.
Bridgeton Bus Garage, Glasgow
0141 554 0544, gvvt.org

NORTHERN IRELAND

04-06 STENDHAL FESTIVAL

Kickstart your summer with singing, dancing, music, comedy, poetry, a dedicated family programme and all modes of merriment courtesy of a stellar cast of performers.
Ballymully Cottage Farm, Limavady, County Londonderry
07936 783420, stendhalfestival.com

23 BEHIND THE SCENES: TRANSPORT STORE TOUR (12.30-1.30PM)

See inside this treasure trove of automotive, aeronautic and industrial collections that highlight the social, industrial, and sporting history of this part of the world.
Ulster Transport Museum, Cultra, Holywood, County Down
028 9042 8428, ulstertransportmuseum.org

• Details correct at time of going to press – please confirm with event organisers before travelling.

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SCAN ME

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Twenty Questions

1. Penguin Books.
2. David Prowse who died on 1 July 1935.
3. Roy Walker who was born on 31 July 1940.
4. Brigit Forsyth who was born on 28 July 1940.
5. The BBC Light Programme.
6. Simon Cadell who was born on 19 July 1950.
7. Vince Clarke who was born on 3 July 1960.
8. Joanne "JK" Rowling who was born on 31 July 1965.
9. Sir John Barbirolli who died on 29 July 1970.
10. Konnie Huq who was born on 17 July 1975.
11. Mary Hignett who died on 6 July 1980.
12. Frank Hampson who died on 8 July 1985.
13. Aldi.
14. Alan Clarke who died on 24 July 1990.
15. Jerry Lordan who died on 24 July 1995.
16. Robert Runcie who died on 11 July 2000.
17. Long John Baldry who died on 21 July 2005.
18. Alex "Hurricane" Higgins who died on 24 July 2010.
19. Sir Peter O'Sullevan who died on 29 July 2015.
20. Dame Olivia de Havilland.

And I quote…

Margaret Lockwood who died on 15 July 1990.

What is it?

A die cutter for cutting identity photographs to size.

Dialect Detective

1c, 2a, 3a, 4b

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

Treasures in the Attic

1. Early Bird matchbox £4, 2. STAR ITEM Advertising spill holder £500, 3. Suprema drawing book £10, 4. Marty Wilde badge £25, 5. Dairy Supply Company cream can £85, 6. "Sweet dreams" Bakelite mug £75, 7. Golden Arrow tin £400, 8. The Police record on green vinyl £15, 9. Wartime Rinso packet £15, 10. Nectar Tea sign £300, 11. Clarnico tin £85, 12. Matchbox army water wagon £55.

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BACK IN TIME WITH COLIN BAKER

BoB's very own Time Lord shares his memories of Wimbledon and how he played against a supercharged septuagenarian who could show Rod Laver a thing or two

Tennis at Wimbledon in the last week of June and first in July has played a large part in my life for as long as I can remember. Hoad and Rosewall, and "Little Mo" and Doris Hart are my earliest memories of Wimbledon finalists which we watched avidly on our black and white televisions in the 1950s.

When I moved to London in 1965, I even queued up on a couple of occasions to watch the likes of Billie Jean King and Manuel Santana playing so superbly in the wooden racket, stroke playing days before the power of the modern game blasted the touch-playing geniuses off the courts. Having recently seen the extraordinary battle between Alcaraz and Sinner in the final of the French Open, you can only wonder how Laver and co would have fared against such finely honed athletic power.

The news that we are to lose the line judges at Wimbledon in favour of the All England Club's version of VAR technology is of course only to be expected in an age where errors are even less welcome, given the sums of money involved, than they have been historically. But, somehow, I shall be sad to lose the sight of those officials marching proudly on to the court in their All England uniforms to spend hours staring fixedly at "their" line in the pursuit of accuracy and perfection. Mercifully, we will still have the ball boys and girls whose disciplined receipt and delivery of tennis balls is always a joy to watch and a credit to those who have trained them so meticulously. I also treasure those moments when the stars briefly take a rest from fist pumping (far too much of that for this sports fan) to interact even briefly with one of the young people who seem to understand and enable the server's need for the "right" ball, whether it is the one they just won a point with or one with just the perfect aerodynamic fluff covering. It is a precious couple of weeks, and I am always slightly irritated if I have had to miss key matches because work has intervened unhelpfully.

Tennis is also the one sport that I was not reluctant to expose my inadequacies in by playing in public. While I was never even club standard, I had a group of friends with whom I could play without being embarrassingly overpowered or easily conquered by my opponent. I used to play with a flatmate and friend who was an opera singer, and we were of a comparable standard, so it was fine. She was going to be away touring and asked me if I would give a game to an elderly American friend of hers who would be in London while she was away being Yum Yum in the Mikado. I was about 36 then; the potential competitor was in his late 70s. I initially demurred but she implored me to help her out as he needed to get the exercise and it would be a gentle workout for me at least.

I met up with this worryingly compact and healthy-looking tanned gentleman who thanked me profusely for indulging his desire for a game and hoped it wouldn't be too boring for me. It wasn't. He barely seemed to move as I hurtled from side to side of the asphalt court in Hampstead. He beat me 6-0, 6-0. "Good game", he said. "Thank you, I enjoyed that." As we chatted afterwards, he told me that he had played with his very good friend Rod Laver earlier in the year and managed to get "a few games off him".

Oh, really?

Photograph: Evening News/Shutterstock

After moving to London, Colin queued up for tickets to see Billie Jean King at Wimbledon.

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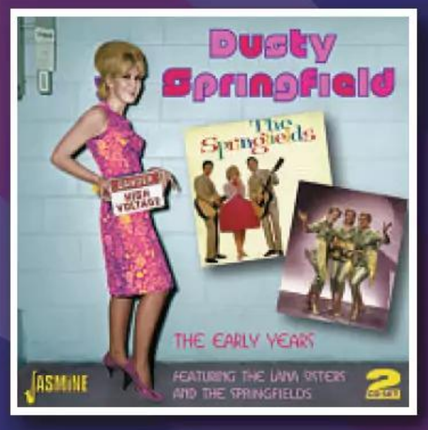

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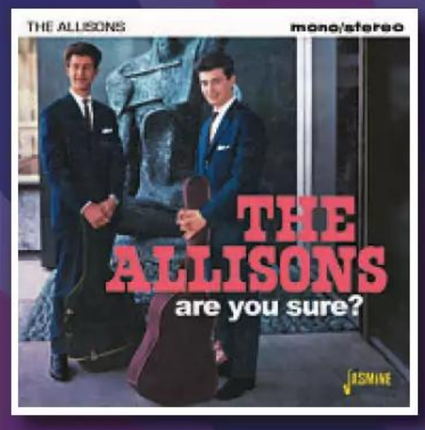

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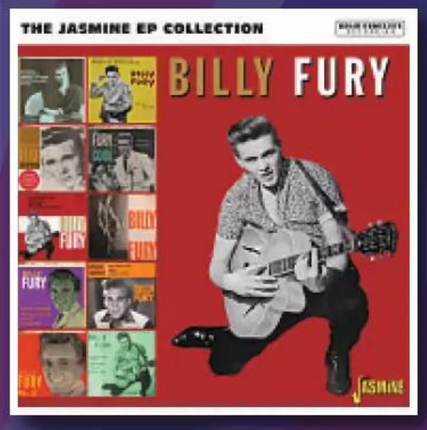

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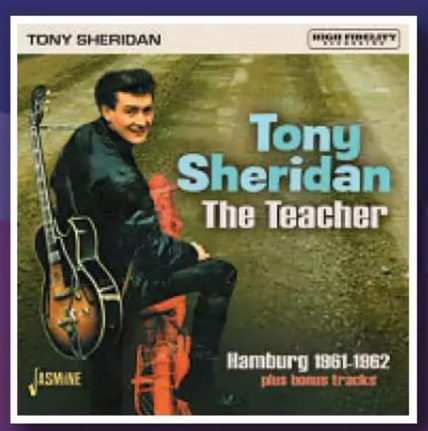

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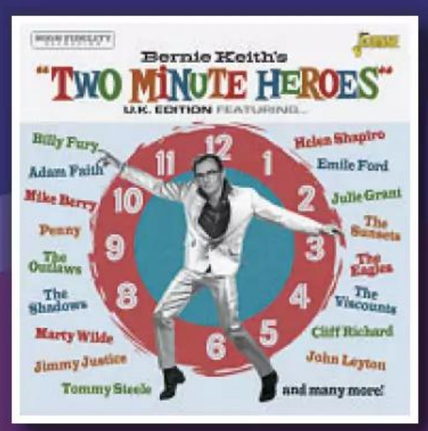

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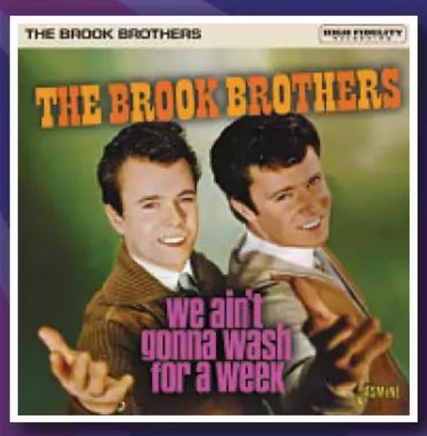

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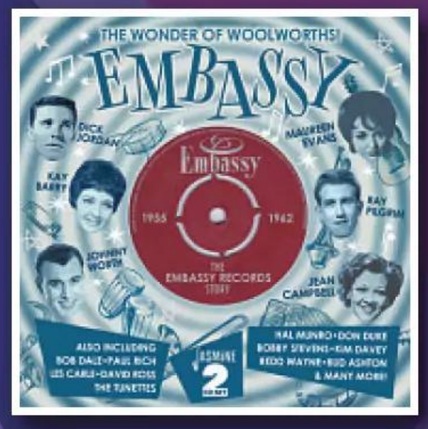

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