

The Carrick Argus

Supporting Carrick u3a – sharing members' interests and news

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Sunset

by Marion Purvis

An entry for the 2023 Photography Competition

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Editorial

First of all, a huge thank you to those of you who came and supported the **Tony Herring Memorial Lecture** on 17th October. Tony was passionate about history, having run the Carrick History Group for many years, along with the Quiz, Science, Chess, Opera, French film and Sunday lunches groups. He also played bridge with the rubber bridge group in Truro and tennis at Boscawen Park. I'm sure he would have enjoyed Jason Semmens' excellent talk on witchcraft and folklore in Cornwall. Planning is already underway for next year's lecture.

The next major event in the Carrick calendar is the **Showcase on Wednesday 13th November** at the **Perranwell Centre**, please note the start time of **10.15am**, this is because we have a packed programme of entertainment for you. Many thanks to the brave souls who have put themselves forward, it could not happen without you. One of the first events I attended when I first joined Carrick 12 years ago was the Christmas Show. I was very impressed by the range and scale of talent on display, and I'm sure this year's Showcase will live up to the high standards set in previous years.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Brenda Burgess, who had been a stalwart supporter of the Carrick Argus since its inception 7 years ago, sending both her own creative writing contributions as well as those of the other members of the Truro group which she led for many years. A tribute to her is on [page 4](#), many thanks to Sue Swinchatt for sending it in.

If you have already subscribed to the u3a Friends Newsletter you should have received your October copy by now, containing an update on the u3a woodland, planted by members to celebrate the movement's 40th anniversary, a new report on the benefits of non-formal learning, renovating a National Trust garden and very impressively, the Philosophy group of St Ives u3a receiving sponsorship from the Royal Institute of Philosophy for the next two years. They are using the funds to host a series of lectures on the **Metaphysics of Time and Space** for u3a members and the wider public.

Our very own Ric Reilly will be running the second of his workshops on the **Let's Talk Tech** forum on **Wednesday 6th November at 1pm**. This will be available via Zoom, full details of how to join are on the Carrick u3a Facebook page. It's great to see Cornwall u3as contributing to the wider u3a community.

Sue Hutt
Editor

A tribute to Brenda Burgess

It was with great sadness that I learned of Brenda's death; she had seemed to be rallying after several months of ill health. I know she will be greatly missed by all her u3a friends, in particular past and present members of the Truro Creative Writing Group she used to lead. She was a talented and enthusiastic writer; I enjoyed her poetry in particular. For a number of years, she also organised the annual **Barbara Scammel Poetry and Prose competition** which was open to all Carrick u3a members. She would invite local writers to judge the entries and a prize-giving would be held in Falmouth, followed by time to chat over wine and a cold buffet. I also got to know Brenda outside of u3a, she was a fun person to have a chat and laugh with over coffee and cake. Some time ago she asked if I would research her family history for her, and it turned out she and I were distant cousins.

Sue Swinchatt

This was the final piece of creative writing which Brenda sent for publication. The poem was written in the early weeks of Israel's incursion into Gaza.

The Homecoming

*The key turned; the door creaked
Open to the air outside.*

*The key turned; the air reeked of
Dust and acrid smoke,
It hurt her throat, and made her choke.*

*The cease-fire's shattering silence rang in her ears,
As relief streamed down her face in a river of tears*

*She sees rubble, wreckage, all laid waste,
Men surround her, harsh voices say,
"Come away, you go home now, make haste.
Your people wait, this is your day."*

*Sirens sounding, a Red Cross steering
Her safely through the people cheering.*

*She seeks their house but bows her head,
There are no doors to open, no keys to turn,
There is no home and their children, dead,
Ashes now, consumed by flames and left to burn.*

*How can reason for triumph be found
In her bartered release?
Where only vengeance and hate abound,
What is the chance of peace?*

Brenda Burgess

Book Review: Traces

TRACES: The memoir of a leading forensic scientist and criminal investigator

By Patricia Wiltshire Published by 353 books, 2019

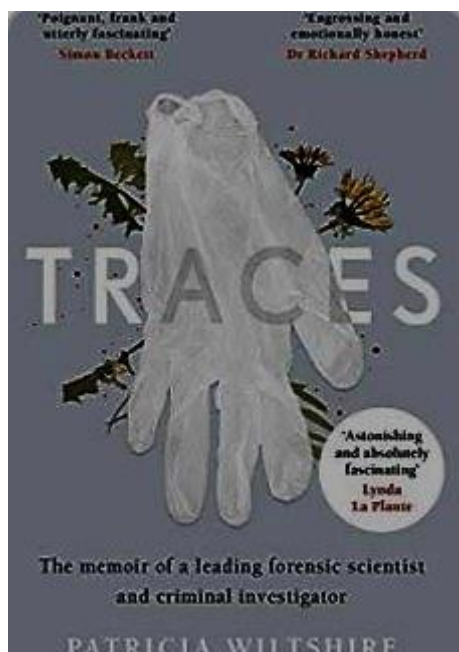


Image courtesy of World of Books

If I was a murderer trying to dispose of the body of my victim outdoors, I wouldn't want the author of this book to be contacted by the investigating officers concerned. Pat Wiltshire spent decades studying the natural world and applying her extensive knowledge to the unlawful burial of bodies and the successful prosecution of their killers.

Forensic science wasn't Pat's chosen career; in fact, she was in her fifties when she had a phone call asking if she could help the Herefordshire police solve a murder case. The victim had been a member of a Chinese Triad gang, who abducted him after he'd double-crossed them. The gang members had been arrested but the police needed proof that their car had driven the corpse into a field of maize to bury it.

When Pat went to examine the car the police garage attendant wasn't impressed: *'I don't know what they brought you here for – there'll be pollen all over it.'* Despite having no idea at that time about forensic protocols or having heard the term **'trace evidence'**, Pat relates *'I just used my common sense. I asked for the footwell mats, pedals, bumper, air filters and radiator to be brought to me.'*

After washing the items carefully and testing samples, she found they contained abundant pollen and spores. A picture of the burial site began forming in her mind: it was beside an ancient hedge containing dogwood, oak, hawthorn, bramble, field maple and blackthorn. The police took her to the field and she told them exactly where the body had lain, due to the different types of pollen the

offenders had trodden on and transferred to the car's interior. Pat's evidence was an important element in the trial and subsequent conviction of the murderers.

Not all Pat's cases were so straightforward, partly due to the lack of cooperation of some police officers. Although taught to take DNA samples and prevent cross-contamination, they found it difficult to understand the importance of careful environmental sampling.

Pollen and spores provide excellent trace evidence because, unlike fibres and mineral particles, they become deeply embedded in fabric for many years, which is very helpful in 'cold case' investigations, which take place a long time after a crime has been committed. Seemingly clean exhibits can have an invisible pollen load. Pat relates, *'I once retrieved a few pollen grains and spores from a torch which had been used by a murderer while burying his victim. Those few particles were enough to tell me he had laid it down at the edge of a fallow field, and this led to his arrest.'*

Palynology is '**the study of dust**', the study of pollen, spores, and all the other microscopic palynomorphs and particulates that can be collected from air, water, some soils and vegetation. I liked Pat's explanation of these: *'The microscopic things in my samples are proxies of the past. If the activity of bacteria and fungi is suppressed by lack of oxygen or by acidity, pollen can remain preserved for thousands of years.'*

Palynological intelligence is the perfect strategy to obtain the maximum amount of evidential material from plants, animals, fungi and footmarks. The natural world may leave traces on a killer's clothing, shoes, tools or car. Pat was tasked with investigating nature's tell-tale traces in numerous cases of violent or sexual assaults, where often one person's version of events was pitted against another's, with little obvious evidence available.



Patricia Wiltshire

Photo courtesy of google images

Pat started out as a medical laboratory technician at Charing Cross Hospital, where she was involved in research projects. Later she enjoyed reading Botany at King's College London, learning the secrets of the many facets of the natural world. She became a lecturer in microbial ecology at the College, then moved on to be an environmental archaeologist at UCL.

Pat says, *'In the first part of my career I was seeking the past, which meant digging into sediments and soils. Forensic work is mostly about the present and the evidence is mostly at the surface.'* Earlier in her book she points out that *'Many people have the wrong concept of forensic science. The word forensic is derived from the Latin 'forensis', meaning pertaining to the open court. Speaking of 'forensic' means that any evidence produced will be pertinent to a court case. Fortunately, I have always loved court arguments where evidence is minutely scrutinised and challenged.'*

Pat clearly became not only an expert witness but also a shrewd observer of human behaviour. She comments, *'It's strange, but murderers often mark a grave in some way, possibly to make it easier to find. Many have been known to revisit the graves of victims, possibly to check whether the body is sufficiently hidden. But who really knows what goes on in their minds?'*

She was involved in several high-profile murder cases, the most well-known of which was probably the Soham investigation. It was her evidence which fed into that and helped to catch the killer Ian Huntley.

Having been an Agatha Christie fan, I was fascinated by the chapter on poisons, particularly the information about fungi. They produce a bewildering array of compounds, many of which are toxic, although fungi are also the source of many antibiotics. In nature, this stops bacteria swarming all over the fungal body, preventing it from absorbing food. Many fungi produce alkaloids such as the ergot fungus. Some of its compounds can cause strong uterine contractions and were used to cause abortions in the past. As a result, many women died or lost limbs, because the dosage was so hit and miss.

In the final chapter, Pat sums up her incredible experiences: *'I have witnessed the outcomes of many different kinds of death – strangulation, poisoning, stabbing and mutilation, as well as the outcomes of body disposals in various places and conditions. One thing that has always impressed me is that the body is an empty vessel; there is nothing left inside to make the body a person. I have no doubt that a someone becomes a something.'*

After death the body will break down into the molecules which built it up from the food taken in. A body left on the surface will break down much more quickly than a buried one, and a cremated individual will be reduced to mineral ash within minutes. If the ash is spread about in a woodland, that person will be truly reincarnated: elements in the ash will be taken up by bacteria, fungi, invertebrates and plant roots. How wonderful to be reincarnated as a bluebell, an oak tree, and a beetle all at the same time. It will happen whether you like the idea or not.'

Pat concludes in her usual wry, down to earth manner: *'I suppose my monument will be my work and my publications. My words will live on, and instead of a gravestone the evidence of my existence will probably be found in some dusty old library somewhere.'*

Sue Amer

The real virgin olive oil

It was late November and we had planned a visit to artist friends living in grand isolation in the hills south east of Siena. Throwing duvets into the car and suspecting a lack of amenities in their ancient farm house we set off as the sun dropped like a ball of fire below the Alpi Apuane.

Night fell like a curtain, the weather changed and within an hour we were driving in torrential rain, the motorway a swirling river, the surrounding hills a solid wall of blackness. Cars sped past with suicidal speed as we peered hopefully through the solid sheets of rain, searching for the turn off to their obscure hamlet. Two hours later we arrived with relief at the nearest village on the map. Being unsure of our friends exact location we made for the light of a bar to ask directions knowing that everyone there would be well acquainted with any '*straniere*' in the district. With the usual countryside helpfulness, a young man insisted on showing us the way. Ignoring the dark and the downpour he hurled his little van along rutted earth tracks deep into the invisible hills. We skidded along in the mud following his bouncing car lights. When we arrived at the house, he simply waved goodbye and disappeared into the rain.

Our friends greeted us with a magnificent meal and a blazing log fire. The warmth of their home surrounded us and after eating well we settled down to roast chestnuts and to hear their news. She was a professional photographer and had spent the past month taking simple formal pictures of the rolling countryside that surrounded the lonely stone house. Most of the land was given over to olive groves and her pictures showed glowing red and orange nets spread ready to catch the ripe black berries raked from the branches of the ancient trees. As she worked, she had made friends with the labourers and in a village close by the local smallholders had their own co-operative oil press that she had been invited to view. Thrilled by this opportunity to see olive oil being made in the traditional way we eagerly abandoned the glowing hearth for the darkness outside.

It was almost midnight but at this time of year the oil press would be working non-stop, day and night to cope with the harvest. The air was now dry and clear, a cold white moon casting soot black shadows as we drove back down the winding hillside track. No street lights, no neon glow in the sky, the undisturbed countryside was unbelievably quiet and still.

Around a bend a crude concrete factory shed stood incongruously on the side of the road, harsh white light striking through a small reinforced glass window. We knocked timidly at the impregnable entrance, the door slid sideways and we were waved inside.

A smell like malted resin filled our nostrils and we were suddenly surrounded by warmth and a cacophony of sound. Two massive granite wheels, two metres across, were slowly grinding olives, leaves and twigs that came rolling down from the storeroom above. It made a sticky brown mash that fell into a spiralling metal mixer where it sat breathing asthmatically against the steel mesh. Machines clanged and rumbled; men shouted instructions as they stacked large circular mats beside the revolving drum. Gobbets of creamed olives spurted onto the mats as the men layered them, thirty at a time, into a massive sandwich. Across the room a stack was being slowly crushed in the press, the oil trickling, black as tar down its side, then piped into the filtering machine and whipped

by centrifugal force with clear water. We gasped at the transformation. A livid fluorescent green oil spurted from the tap - the miracle of the first virgin pressing.

At the far end of the shed was a tall stone chimney beneath which an open fire was being tended by a small cheerful woman called Catrina. She provided round the clock sustenance for the workers for the duration of the pressing. She came towards us smiling and after filling a glass jug with the new green oil led us to a small room behind the chimney where a rough table was set with thick plates and glasses. Here the smallholders gathered, the cognoscente, to taste the new oil, to compare and remember and discuss the merits of this and past harvests.

Caterina cut chunks of hard local bread and crisped it quickly on the scalding hearth, scraped a head of garlic generously across the rough slices, placed them on a plate and poured the opaque green oil liberally over all. Jugs of dark wine were thumped on the table with an emphatic '*Manga!*' – which we did despite our earlier dinner.

This first cold pressed oil is unlike any other, it is sweet as nut juice with a strong peppery catch to the throat and the aroma of cut grass and is kept by owners of the olive groves for their own use. Only a very little finds its way to the expensive merchants in Siena, Rome and Florence. Most of the Extra Virgin oils found in delicatessens are made by consortiums like Cios or large fattorias such as Bertoli and the oil found in worldwide supermarkets is a poor relation, extracted by heat from the desiccated pulp that has been scraped from the mats after pressing.

The strong wine, the heat of the fire, the pungent oily crostini and the animated conversation made time fly. Hours later we left the factory shed, warmed by the farmers' unfailing hospitality, to see the rounded hills of the Sienese countryside rising mistily in the dawn light. Clutched in my hand was a litre of the finest oil in the world (Caterina guarantees it) to take home, a truly magnificent souvenir of a night to remember.

Back in Cornwall I often make a recipe for Salsa D'Olive (Italian Tapenade) where you can use cheap tinned stoned black olives and a much less elevated olive oil to make a very tasty spread. A faint reflection of the magnificent feast we devoured in Tuscany!

Take 6oz stoned and rinsed black olives, 2 tablespoons capers, 4 rinsed anchovy fillets, a large clove garlic, a tablespoon of grappa (Vodka or plain gin will do instead), 1 teaspoon dried thyme, plenty ground pepper, 3 tablespoons olive oil. Process in a blender until mixture is almost smooth. The sauce improves with keeping and can be kept in the fridge in a tightly lidded jar for 3-4 weeks. Use on crostini (or on salads or warm cooked vegetables with more oil added).

Buon Appetito!

Leonie Whitton

John Thomas - Pirate?

When researching history, it is always useful to find people with more unusual names. For example, I had an aunt Venus, named after her aunt Venus. (I was always grateful as a child that my mother didn't carry on the tradition.) Unfortunately, in times gone by it was common to pass on family forenames, which if it was a more common one such as James or John, Mary or Anne, can make life very confusing for the historian. Every first-born son in my mother's family was called James, as far back as 1591, and probably earlier. To distinguish them from each other my sister and I referred to them as James 1, James 2 etc.

I was intrigued recently to see a gravestone in **Gulval** churchyard belonging to one **John Thomas**. It is unusual in that carved on it are a skull and crossbones, the signs of a pirate. Sadly, the name John Thomas was fairly common in the Middle Ages. The man in this grave was, according to church records, born in 1692 and baptised in Gulval Church, his parents being John and Margery. In 1738 he married Martha Bant, dying in **Marazion** in 1753.



Photo courtesy of cornishbirdblog.com

Given the inscription on his gravestone, it is not unreasonable to assume that his profession was that of a pirate, and indeed John Thomas died a wealthy man, as evidenced by the size of his burial ground and his will, which stated that he left £2129 in bequests to friends and family, with the remainder going to his wife. At a time when a labourer could earn around £16 a year, such a sum would have taken some accumulating. Most of his family were recorded as yeomen, or simple farmers. John also owned the leases to three properties, in **Gulval**, **Wendron** and **Madron**. The will, which does not state his occupation, can be viewed at the Cornwall Record Office.

There is no mention of John Thomas pirate in Wikipedia's list of pirates. Perhaps he wasn't important or rich enough to feature there. Between 1622 and 1641 **Sir James Bagg** recorded all the names of seamen and fishermen in the south of Cornwall. In **Newlyn**, close to Marazion and Gulval, he found three men called John Thomas. Was one of them the man buried in Gulval churchyard under a skull and crossbones? We have no way of knowing. We are back to the problem of common names.



Image courtesy of Wikipedia

However, coming from a family of yeomen, there has to be some explanation for his wealth. Perhaps he was a licensed privateer, and as he was never convicted of a crime that would seem to be the most likely explanation. A '**lettre de marque**' could be issued to people prepared to attack foreign vessels with impunity, as long as they shared the booty with the crown. First issued by Henry III in 1243, they saved the government money by reducing the need for an extensive navy. By the 16th century the practice was widespread and continued to be extremely profitable. During the American War of Independence for example, ships from Guernsey seized both French and American ships to the value of £900,000, equivalent in today's prices to over £145million. Not bad for the size of a place like Guernsey!

The inscription on John Thomas's gravestone reads

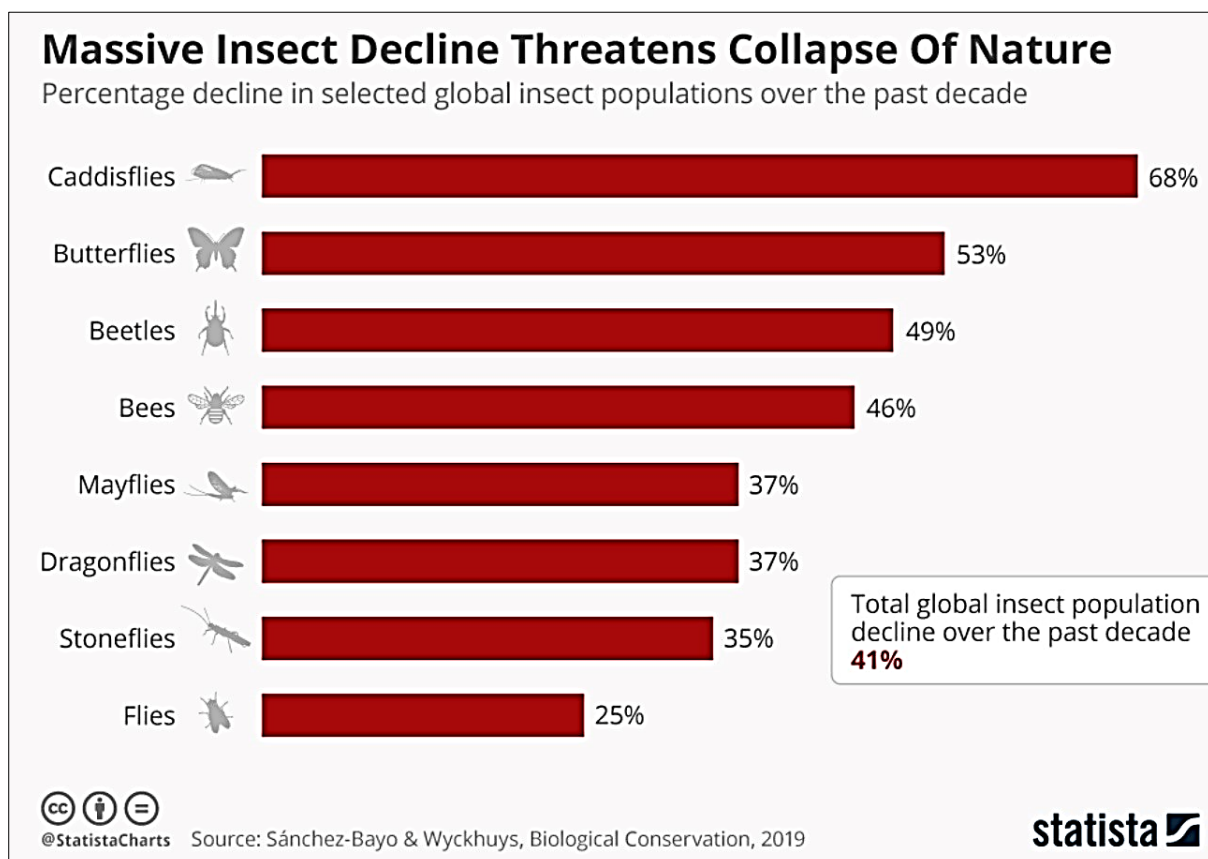
*Study to imitate, you won't excell
If you would live beloved and die so well*

Rather different from the usual carvings on gravestones at the time. He was perhaps a very unusual man.

Sue Hutt

Insects

There has been a noticeable lack of insects this year in the UK. Many flowers on our tomato plants failed to get pollinated, resulting a lower crop. If it has affected our very small scale growing it will certainly be of great concern to farmers. While this has largely been attributed to the wide scale use of pesticides in agriculture, they are not the only substances harmful to insects.



Courtesy of Statista.com

Ant powder, flea preparations for dogs and cats, herbicides and even some household washing up liquids contain harmful ingredients. Fipronil, permethrin, imidacloprid, dinotefuran and nitenpyram are all extremely toxic to bees and if a dog swims in rivers after having flea treatment, then these chemicals wash off and affect the aquatic life as well.

Of the 10 million dogs and 11 million cats in the UK, over 80% are given flea treatments, whether they need them or not. It is now recommended that flea combs are used regularly as that is more environmentally friendly. A study conducted from 2016-2018 and published in the journal **Science and the Environment** found fipronil present in 99% of the UK's rivers with the concentrations up to 38 times higher than their toxicity limits.

Another major contributor to the decimation of the bee population was the insistence by the previous government, against the advice of its scientists, that sugar beet producers should be

allowed to use thiamethoxam, a chemical banned in the EU, which is highly toxic to bees. According to Professor Dave Goulson from the University of Sussex, who is an expert on bees, one teaspoon is enough to kill 1.25 billion bees. The current government have promised to reinstate the ban on neonicotinoids to safeguard pollinators.



A pollinating Bee

Image courtesy of Greenpeace

In March this year, Richard Benwell, the chief executive of Wildlife and Countryside Link, said, *“It comes to something when you have to re-ban a banned pesticide, but Labour has sent an important signal today that it would not succumb to industry pressure at the expense of wildlife and nature-friendly farming.”*

The organisation **Buglife** is calling on the government to recognise the decline of the insect population and to restore it to sustainable levels by banning the use of harmful chemicals, planting wildflower stretches and setting targets to reduce light pollution as this has also been shown to be a contributory factor. Buglife are also concerned about non-active ingredients added to products. Some glyphosate-based herbicides contain ethoxylates which are not subject to safety testing but which are capable of killing bees.

It is a complicated situation with many lines of attack needed if this dire situation is to be reversed. With goodwill and determination on all sides it can be done.

Sue Hutt

Ref. buglife.org.uk
theguardian.com
statista.com

Creative writing: In the 'Bagging-off' shop

'Money for old rope!' Anita told her, *'Just a bit of cleaning, but paid full rate.'* So, Dawn had agreed to work the extra shift with half a dozen others, doing a 'spring clean' of the Bagging-Off shop while production was halted for the fitters and electricians to do maintenance and repairs. Of course it wasn't actually Spring; it was a wet day in November, and so no real hardship to come in to work. Dawn was currently pushing a barrow around, collecting split bags, torn labels, damaged boxes and all the other discarded material that had accumulated in corners, under benches and shelves and behind the processing machinery that now stood silent. Anita was with a gang of girls scraping caked-on soap powder and flakes from the machines themselves, and from the girders that made up the framework of the building.

Dawn pushed her barrow down the length of the shop and through the doors into the yard, to tip its load into the lorry for transport to...she realised she had no idea where all this stuff went. Anyway, it was raining so she quickly headed back inside, where she found nineteen-year-old Mike, an apprentice fitter, enjoying an illicit Park Drive. Dawn quite fancied Mike; he was good-looking, with a sense of humour, and he owned an Ariel motorbike on which he had promised Dawn a trip to Scarborough for the next time trials. *'So, what are you doing?'* she asked.

'Oh, we've got the NIRO in bits, so that we can give it a clean and replace a few parts.'

'Will it be going again for the ten-to-six?'

Mike took a final drag on his cigarette and threw the dog-end out into the rain. *'Oh, easy. Be done by five, I should think. Anyway, I'd better see how they're getting on.'*

Dawn grinned to herself. You'd think he was the foreman already, she thought, as she pushed the barrow past the cages where boxes, bags and cartons were stored. Off to her left she could see two girls cleaning the plodder, and ahead the bulk of the NIRO, which produced soap powder and flakes. Casings and filters were removed, and inside two figures in blue overalls were busy installing the new parts, overseen by the white boiler suited figure of Ted, the foreman fitter. Further along she had to duck to get under the trunking which carried the machine's exhaust air through the wall and out into the street. Here too some of the side panels had been removed, and Dawn saw that for some reason the inside was painted yellow.

An hour later, on another trip to dump the rubbish, she saw that almost all the outer casing was back in position on the NIRO. Ted was speaking to Mike the apprentice, and she dawdled to listen. *'Just put the rest back, check round everything, tell me when it's done. I'll be in the office,'* the foreman said.

Mike nodded and grinned, *'Finished in record time, eh?'*

'Aye, well, that's not always the important thing, son. Anyway, see you later.'

Just before five o'clock Dawn was nerving herself for a wet trip across the yard to the cloakroom block when she felt a vibration and heard the rising whine of the NIRO's motor starting up. Out of habit she glanced at the delivery chute to check that there was a bag in position, then watched the scale that indicated when it was full and ready to be replaced. After a minute or so she frowned; the bag was filling much slower than usual – something wasn't right. Before she had time to investigate Anita came panting in from the yard. *'Have you seen what's happening outside?'*

Dawn stared at her.

Anita grabbed her arm and began to drag her over to the window. *'Come and look!'*

Together they stared out into the dark street; it appeared to be snowing. But instead of the white flakes disappearing as they hit the wet tarmac, a river of foam was growing as the evening traffic hissed past. Dawn craned her neck to look upwards; out of the wall above them a cloud of white was spraying out to flutter down onto the street. As they stared, a van slid past travelling sideways and thumped into the back of the lorry in front of it.

'Oh, hell!' Anita exclaimed, 'What's going on?'

Dawn did not answer; instead, she ran back to the machine and firmly pulled the red *'Emergency Stop'* handle. As the motor whined down to a halt, she motioned Anita to follow her, ducking under the trunking; on the other side one panel was still detached, and leaning against the wall was a four-foot square of fine wire mesh. *'You know what that is, don't you?'*

Anita shook her head.

'That's an exhaust filter! It's not been put back!'

In the silence they heard from the street outside an engine racing, followed by a heavy crash. Dawn wondered whether Mike would still be around to collect his Christmas bonus.

u3a Carrick member writing as Warren Thorpe

Creative writing: Ghosts

I can't help feeling confused when I read that CANNY means shrewd and UNCANNY is described as ghostly, weird, spooky and supernatural, not at all related to CANNY. Unravelling our language is an impossible minefield – I think I'll ask Susy Dent from Countdown!

So, Ghosts are decidedly UNCANNY and that is our theme for this Tide of Hallowe'en, which really means the 'Eve of All Saints'. I can't bear the way the Americans have twisted the festival into 'Trick-or-Treat', a really nasty activity for children to be indulging in, especially as they are aided and abetted by very strange parents.

I'm not sure if I've ever actually been aware of a Ghost, but I have a clear memory of a group of us, (friends at school), squeezing ourselves into a music cell after supper and indulging in a Séance. We would remove the window from its frame and lay it on the piano stool, then spread out the letters of the alphabet round the edge, with a 'Yes' at the top and a 'No' at the bottom. Someone would produce a small glass, place it in the middle of the window and we would all put our little fingers on it and ask *"Spirit, are you there?"*. Quaking with fear, we would watch the glass whizz up to the 'Yes'. The next question for the Spirit was, *'Spirit, what is your name?'* whereupon the glass would whizz round the letters spelling out someone's name – sometimes interesting and sometimes not.

One day, when asked for a name, the glass spelled out the name of a Polish Airman. We were spellbound as we asked him questions and learned that, as a young man, he had fled from Poland for England in World War Two and joined the Royal Air Force as a fighter pilot. He had been billeted at the school while the pupils were evacuating in Chagford, Devon.

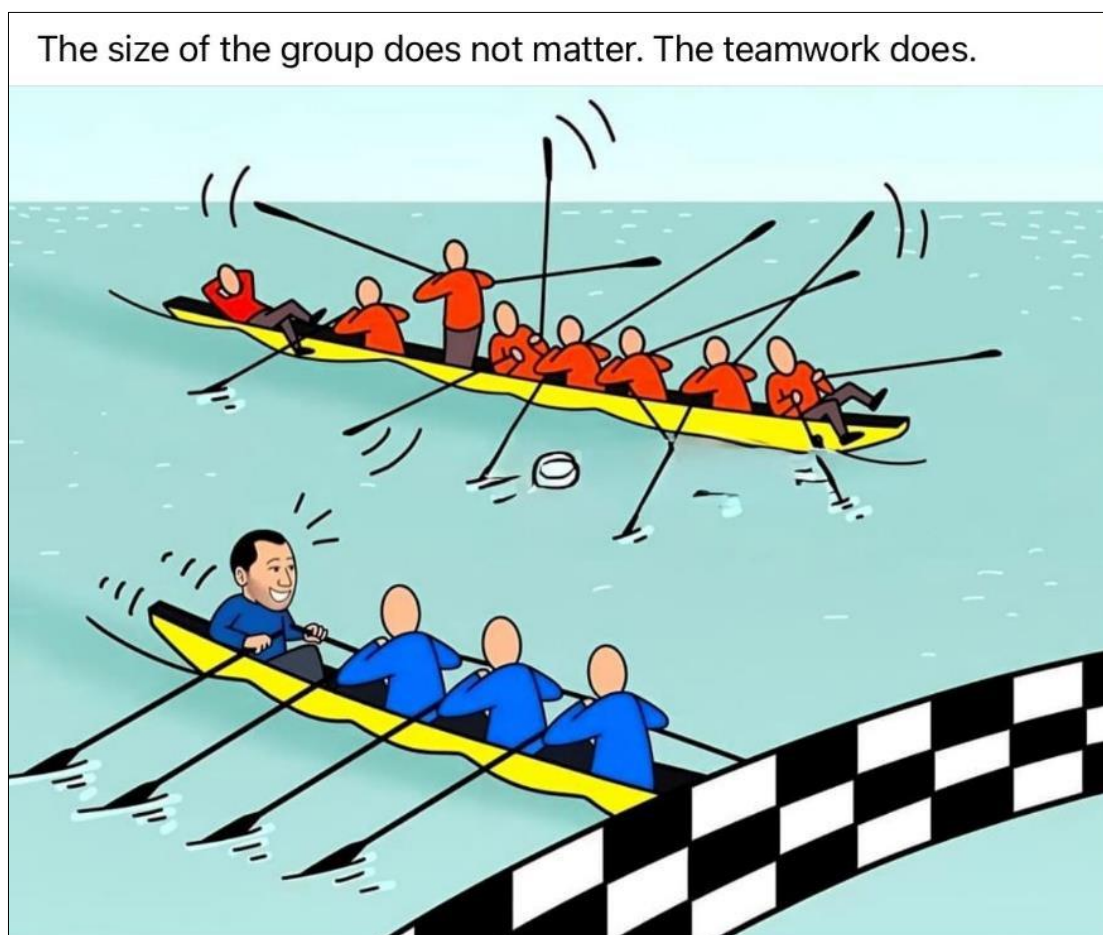
Sadly, he was shot down and killed, probably during the Battle of Britain and there had been reports of his Ghost drifting down the school corridors, probably only seen by the more imaginative girls!

One day, we were up to our usual Séance pastime, settled in, comfortably squashed in the music cell - 'Spirit, are you there?' we asked. 'Yes' was the answer. 'Spirit what is your name'? **G O D** was the answer - shrieks of shock, the window frame shot into the air and we never indulged in that particular activity again! There were times when we thought someone was actually pushing the glass, but we all pleaded innocence and I certainly believed in it at the time and probably still do.

I remember, as a teenager, I used to stay with my aunt, who lived in a lovely cosy old farm cottage, in Sussex and she swore there was a ghost living there too. We never knew who the ghost was, or anything about him or her, but my aunt said she used to feel an unexplained waft of air brush past her.

I suppose I do believe in Ghosts, but haven't experienced any proof. I think of them as restless souls, who are unable to leave the World behind, but who shouldn't be disturbed by those still living.

Eleanor Holland



Courtesy of Facebook

Poem: Why do men keep fish?

*When we became middle class
We moved to a new house - detached
With an oak panelled dining room
And an acre of garden. How flash*

*At the end of our lawn behind the hedge
Our neighbour kept fish
In a manorial pond with an arched bridge
And lilies. How posh!*

*When we became middle class
We took on a mortgage we could not afford
Massive monthly repayments
And no holidays abroad*

*With chattels and pets
Our family moved to the much larger house
Including Timmy, the cat,
And the youngest's white mouse.*

*When we became middle class
A flap we installed in the utility door
A whole new world out there
For the cat to explore*

*The mouse and his wheel
Too noisy for our daughter in bed on at night,
We relocated to the kitchen
To give visitors a fright.*

*When we became middle class
Timmy, the cat, began giving us presents.
By dropping half eaten rodents
For us to discover. So unpleasant!*

*Then he brought in live bait to chase around the hall
And we squealed and we turfed
Timmy out of his door,
To the garden where he was supposed to explore.*

*When we became middle class
I bought doormats of coir
With "welcome" emblazoned in bold
On the top, as seen in shop foyer.*

*And Timmy the cat had his own special mat
By his flap in the door on the utility floor.
A custom-made job with the words
"Timmy Welcomes You" signed with his paw.*

*When we became middle class
Even the cat went up market,
Dragging a Koi carp from the garden
To leave on the hall carpet*

*So, I googled the price of a prize Koi Carp
And to replace would cost me a hundred quid.
There was no other option,
The fish must be hid.*

*When we became middle class,
I made compost for the veg I would grow,
And into the mulch the dead fish was deposited
In the hope no one would ever know.*

*That night over tea as we sat in the dining room
Looking through our French windows on to the lawn
My husband espied the cat, to my horror,
Playing with something all forlorn.*

*When we became middle class
I bought bags for life and went environmental
And into one of these, without irony,
The dead Koi was stuffed. Unsentimental!*

*The bin lid was slammed on the Sainsbury's logo
And the Koi forgotten, Timmy forgiven.
Until the morning when the carp reappeared
On the cat's mat, half-eaten.*

*When we became middle class
We dreamed of planting our herbaceous beds
With Spear and Jacksons
Which we kept in the shed.*

*Late at night so as not to be seen,
My husband with spade took the fish
To its grave amongst the asters and sedum.
Never to be seen again, my last wish!*

*When we became middle class
Neighbours didn't usually call round for a chat,
So, when one appeared on our doorstep
We worried he wanted to discuss our cat.*

*He explained he had lost several fish
From his pond behind us
And wondered if from our windows
We had seen anything suspicious.*

*When we became middle class
 We knew how to deceive
 And agreed with our neighbour
 When he thought it was thieves.*

*Because, as he stated, he'd lost some fish
 Worth hundreds of pounds,
 And he'd not seen a heron
 Or any cats around.*

*When we became middle class
 We knew what to do, offered a sherry
 Hid the cat in the loo,
 And made sure the neighbour left merry.*

*As he walked away down the drive
 I turned to my husband with fear in my eyes.
 "I thought it was one that Timmy refound",
 "Good God, it was more. That's three hundred pounds!"*

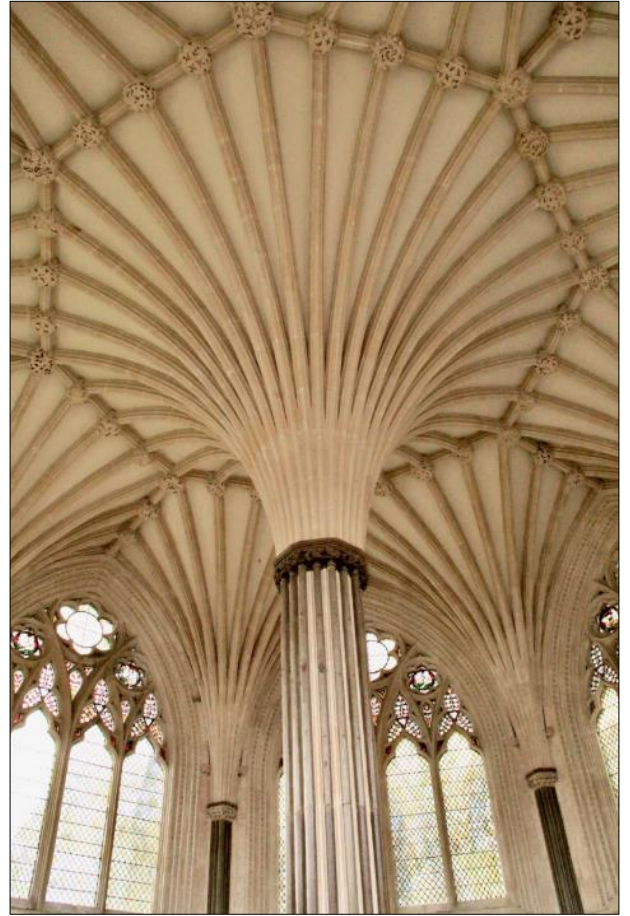
*When we became middle class
 I returned to work to add to our income,
 Leaving the pets on their own
 The cat in charge of his kingdom*

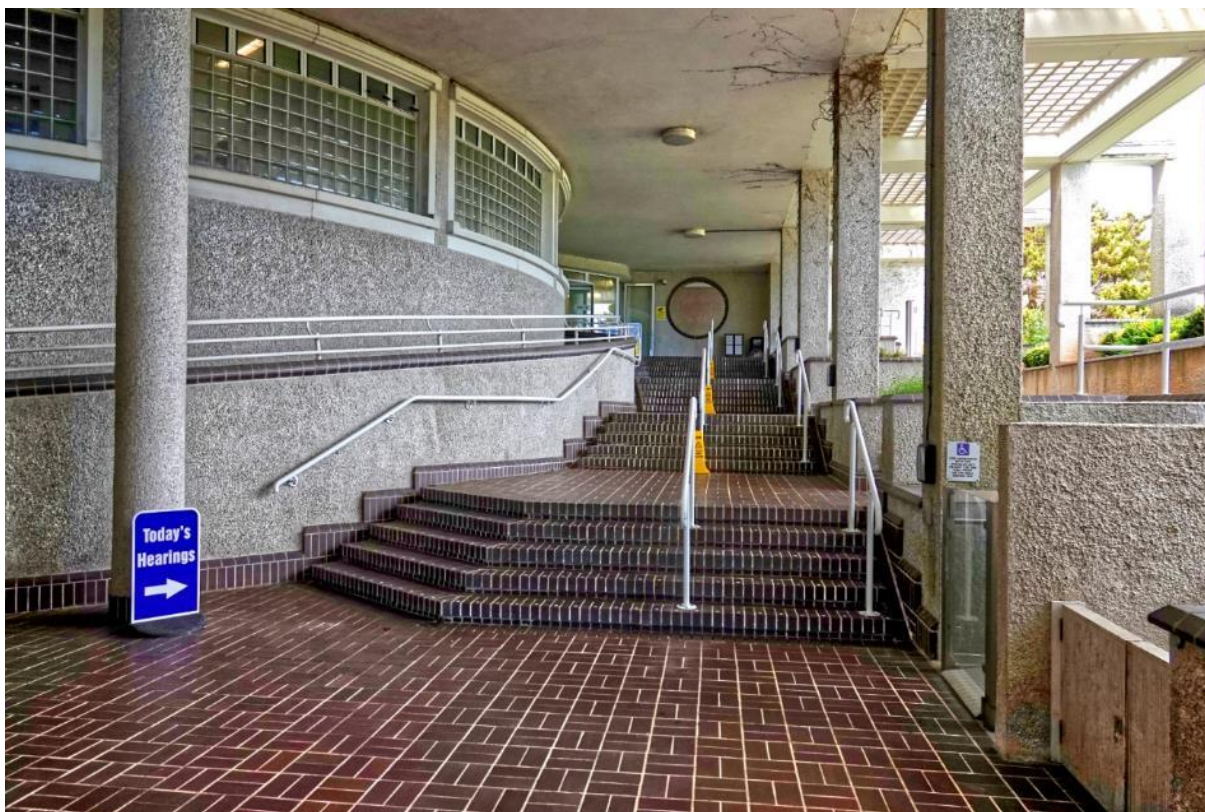
*Every morning before I left,
 I turned Timmy's flap to "in" not "out"
 And he skulked in the house,
 Not angling nor dangling nor hanging about.*

*When we became middle class,
 Our children were prized and pampered.
 Their happiness essential,
 Not to be hampered.*

*So, when the little mouse in the cage in the kitchen
 Became prey to a bored and frustrated cat,
 We hid its remains, bought another just like it,
 And that is a family secret still intact!*

Inside Buildings









All images courtesy of u3a Carrick
Photography group

Quiz

Who had a number 1 hit on both sides of the Atlantic with these songs?

1. Don't let the stars get in your eyes (1953)
2. Mack the knife (1959)
3. Cathy's clown (1960)
4. Oh, Pretty woman (1964)
5. I got you babe (1965)
6. Get off of my cloud (1965)
7. I'm a believer (1967)
8. Something stupid (1967)
9. Maggie May (1971)
10. Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree (1973)
11. Three times a lady (1978)
12. I just called to say I loved you (1984)
13. I wanna dance with somebody (1987)
14. (Everything I do) I do it for you (1991)
15. I'd do anything for love (but I won't do that) (1993)

Which products were these slogans used to advertise?















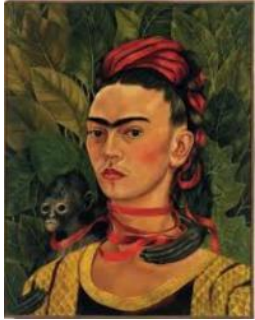

1. Put a tiger in your tank
2. Your flexible friend
3. Soft strong and very, very long
4. The taste of paradise
5. Splash it all over
6. I'd rather have a bowl of
7. Buy it, sell it, love it
8. Australian for beer
9. Just do it
10. If it's on, it's in
11. Reassuringly expensive
12. Don't just book it
13. Let your fingers do the walking
14. The appliance of science
15. Your mother wouldn't like it

In 2020 who won

1. Sports Personality of the year?
2. Strictly Come Dancing?
3. The Voice?
4. Masterchef?
5. Dancing on Ice?

[Answers on page 27](#)

Picture quiz: Identify the Artist in each case

 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>	 <p>4</p>
 <p>5</p>	 <p>6</p>	 <p>7</p>	 <p>8</p>
 <p>9</p>	 <p>10</p>	 <p>11</p>	 <p>12</p>
 <p>13</p>	 <p>14</p>	 <p>15</p>	 <p>16</p>

[Answers on page 28](#)

Rock a bye baby

The nursery rhyme '**Rock a bye baby**' was first printed in Mother Goose's Melody in London in 1765, although first editions no longer exist. Various theories regarding the origin of the verse have been put forward, with Iona and Peter Opie, who have done extensive work around nursery rhymes, listing many of them without endorsing any. These range from the baby representing the Egyptian god Horus, to lampooning the British royal family at the time of James 1, to a warning that those who climb high will eventually fall.

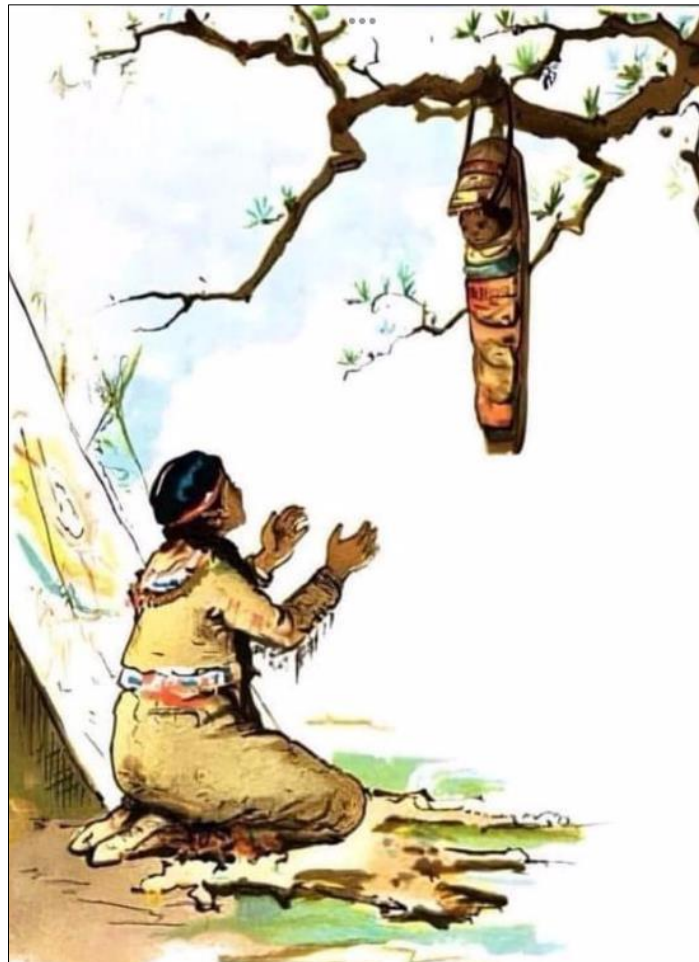


Image courtesy of Facebook

Perhaps the most intriguing though is the one about English colonial settlers (possibly but by no means certainly Effie, the sister of Davy Crockett), watching mothers in the Muskogee tribe hanging the papooses from the boughs of trees to protect their babies from ground insects, wild animals and the sun. The swaying of the branches in the breeze would lull the babies to sleep. The breaking of the bough was thought to signify the growing up of the babies when they became too big for the papoose and no longer needed that protection. The rhyme was certainly popular in the English colonies at the time which perhaps lends some credence to the theory.

Sue Hutt

Ref wikipedia.com

Cradle songs in *The Juvenile Instructor* vol 28 1893

Quiz answers

Who had a number 1 hit on both sides of the Atlantic with these songs?

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Don't let the stars get in your eyes (1953) | Perry Como |
| 2. Mack the knife (1959) | Bobby Darin |
| 3. Cathy's clown (1960) | The Everly Brothers |
| 4. Oh, Pretty woman (1964) | Roy Orbison |
| 5. I got you babe (1965) | Sonny and Cher |
| 6. Get off of my cloud (1965) | The Rolling Stones |
| 7. I'm a believer (1967) | The Monkees |
| 8. Something stupid (1967) | Nancy and Frank Sinatra |
| 9. Maggie May (1971) | Rod Stewart |
| 10. Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree (1973) | Tony Orlando and Dawn |
| 11. Three times a lady (1978) | The Commodores |
| 12. I just called to say I loved you (1984) | Stevie Wonder |
| 13. I wanna dance with somebody (1987) | Whitney Houston |
| 14. (Everything I do) I do it for you (1991) | Bryan Adams |
| 15. I'd do anything for love (but I won't do that) (1993) | Meat Loaf |

















Which products were these slogans used to advertise?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Put a tiger in your tank | Esso petrol |
| 2. Your flexible friend | Access |
| 3. Soft strong and very, very long | Andrex toilet paper |
| 4. The taste of paradise | Bounty |
| 5. Splash it all over | Brut |
| 6. I'd rather have a bowl of | Coco Pops |
| 7. Buy it, sell it, love it | eBay |
| 8. Australian for beer | Fosters |
| 9. Just do it | Nike |
| 10. If it's on, it's in | Radio Times |
| 11. Reassuringly expensive | Stella Artois |
| 12. Don't just book it | Thomas Cook |
| 13. Let your fingers do the walking | Yellow Pages |
| 14. The appliance of science | Zanussi |
| 15. Your mother wouldn't like it | Club 18-30 |

In 2020 who won

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sports Personality of the year? | Lewis Hamilton |
| 2. Strictly Come Dancing? | Bill Bailey |
| 3. The Voice? | Blessing Chitapa |
| 4. Masterchef? | Thomas Frake |
| 5. Dancing on Ice? | Joe Swash |

Picture quiz answers

 <p>Monet</p>	 <p>Van Gogh</p>	 <p>Picasso</p>	 <p>Rembrandt</p>
 <p>Titian</p>	 <p>Gainsborough</p>	 <p>Turner</p>	 <p>Paul Klee</p>
 <p>Leonardo Da Vinci</p>	 <p>Salvadore Dali</p>	 <p>Michelangelo</p>	 <p>Jackson Pollock</p>
 <p>Tracey Emin</p>	 <p>Georgia O'Keeffe</p>	 <p>Frida Kahlo</p>	 <p>Caravaggio</p>


Flushing in old & new photos



Courtesy of Then & Now GB and Facebook

Thoughts for the day


PHILOSOPHICAL RHYTHMS

A circular portrait of George Carlin, a man with a beard and long hair, wearing a light-colored sweater. The portrait is set against a dark background and is framed by a white circular line with a small gap at the top and bottom.

“ Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.”

~ George Carlin

PHILOSOPHICAL RHYTHMS

A circular portrait of Franz Kafka, a man wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, a dark tie, and a fedora hat. The portrait is set against a dark background and is framed by a white circular line with a small gap at the top and bottom.

“ An idiot is an idiot. Two idiots are two idiots. Ten thousand idiots are a political party.”

~ Franz Kafka

Both courtesy of Facebook

Carrick Argus: Contact details

We look forward to receiving your letters and any other contributions you may like to offer such as quizzes, articles, and short stories by email to

carrickargus2017@gmail.com

Deadline for next issue – Wednesday 27th November 2024

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- 2) The topics of your contributions should be restricted to those likely to be of interest to members of u3as. But see 6 below.
- 3) Apart from obvious typing errors, your contribution will never be altered or cut without first being returned to you for your agreement. That includes punctuation.
- 4) Contributions must show name of contributor; contact details their choice. A contributor may instead select a pen name, but if so, their own name will be supplied to any reader who asks for it.
- 5) A contribution that is critical of an identifiable individual will not be published. But see 6 below.
- 6) If contributing, you should regard yourself as responsible for factual accuracy. Opinions are your own.

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