

The Carrick Argus

Supporting Carrick u3a – sharing members' interests and news

Issue no 96

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What's for dinner?

by Richard Barton

The winning entry in the 2023 u3a Carrick photography competition

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Editorial

It already seems a long time ago, but a belated thanks to all those brave souls who entertained a full house at the Showcase on 13th November, to those helping out backstage and of course to the front of house and refreshments teams. There was a great variety of acts showing a wonderful array of talent amongst our members, hopefully others will be inspired to come forward next year to make this a regular event.

There are still some places available on our upcoming trips, so if you are interested, please contact Lesley Vingoe, LaV@u3acarrick.org.uk for details.

**10th December for Cotehele,
£15 per person for coach, payable by 1st December.**

**19th December for Angarrack Lights and a fish and chips supper afterwards in Carbis Bay,
£14 per person for coach payable by 10th December.**

It's been a busy year for Carrick u3a, with quiz nights, a garden party, bingo, several trips and of course the Showcase, in addition to over 60 groups to join for your delight and delectation. Quite a bargain for £28 a year! None of these would happen without the input of many of you, so a huge thank you to all who have helped to make Carrick u3a the great success that it has become. If anyone has ideas for other social events or feels able to contribute in any way, please get in touch with any member of the committee, whose details are in the newsletter. I have a list of people willing to help out on an occasional basis, whether it's making teas and coffees, putting out chairs before meetings, signing members in etc, but it would be great to add a few more names so we are not reliant on the same people every time. If you feel you could help in this way, please get in touch vicechair@u3acarrick.org.uk, thank you. There are also vacancies on the committee, if there were more of us, we would be able to offer more activities. Please contact Lesley Parsons, chair@u3acarrick.org.uk if you would like a chat about what it might involve.

Thank you for your support over the last 12 months, especially to my contributors, as the Argus would not exist without you. I hope you have all enjoyed what Carrick u3a has to offer, I look forward to meeting many of you next year and receiving any contributions you may have for the Argus.

Finally, may I wish you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Sue Hutt
Editor

Adrian's photos from the Showcase





Courtesy of Adrian Rowlands

Celebrating older people



The Parade of the Hats

On the 18th September 2024 there was a fascinating article in the Guardian about how Poland celebrates its older people. The most obvious example is the annual **March of Hats** through the town of **Wrocław**, when, dressed in extravagant clothes and colourful hats, a huge gathering of older people saunter along the streets, crossing the 13th century defensive town walls and into the main square where the mayor hands the key of the gate to the couple chosen to be **King and Queen** for the day. The most original headdresses are awarded prizes, then everyone dances to the music of their youth, including this year '*I wanna hold your hand*' by the **Beatles** and '*Blue Suede Shoes*' by **Elvis**.





More of the bonnets on display

The March of the Hats is followed by a month of activities including visits to the opera, drama and painting workshops, Nordic walking and film nights. The aim is to demonstrate that older people do not have to be lonely and inactive, they still have much to offer and can live their lives to the full. Interestingly, **Wrocław** and **Kraków** are both held up as shining examples to the rest of Europe as having the largest number of u3as for the size of the cities.

Kraków has also introduced a number of schemes offering direct help to older people in need of support. Those living alone can call a **'golden handyman'** who will do anything from changing lightbulbs to unblocking drains, for no extra fee. They also provide 50 centres, open daily from 10am-3pm where activities are provided to bring together older and younger people. Younger retirees are hosting workshops on topics such as **online banking** and **how to avoid scams**.

In **Wrocław**, those aged 60+ are entitled to hold a 'senior's card' which gives free access to museums and theatres, while those aged over 90 can have free home visits from hairdressers, dentists and cleaners. Retirees in Poland may not, on average, be as well off as those in Denmark, Switzerland and Norway, but they have a wealth of opportunities that many in this country can only dream of. Hopefully Carrick u3a is going some way to enriching the lives of its members but we only reach a small percentage of the retired and semi-retired of the area, and without council help we are fully dependent on our volunteers. We are currently compiling a list of people prepared to help on an ad hoc basis. If you feel you could contribute in any way, please email vicechair@u3acarrick.org.uk. We may not be able to offer free dental care, but the more of us there are, the greater the number of activities we can provide.

Sue Hutt

Ref: The Guardian 18th September 2024

All Images courtesy of Róbert Némethi & The Guardian

Book review: Hortobiography

A gritty woman's tale of people, places and plants by Carol Klein

Published by Penguin Random House UK, 2024

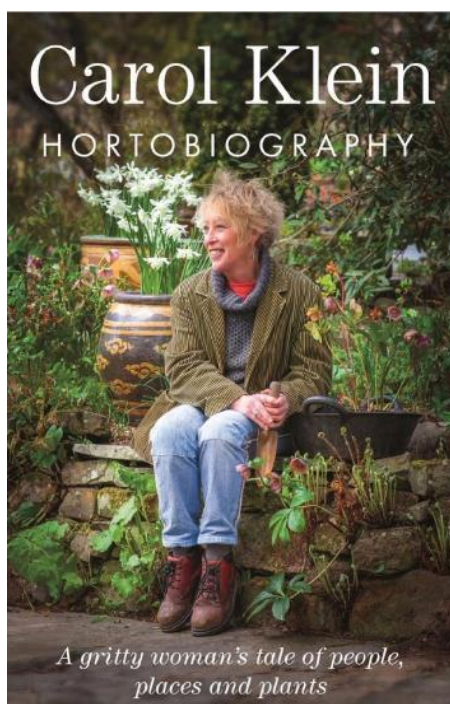


Image courtesy of Waterstones

Firstly, as an art teacher, then a TV presenter and now an author, **Carol Klein** has been a good communicator. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about her Mancunian childhood and varied career before she became one of the nation's best-known gardeners. Each chapter is followed by in-depth information about a particular flower.

Her story includes amusing elements of social history, such as her teenage recollection of white boots and black eyeliner, and nylons held up with suspenders. In her more mature years, she ran a nursery for 30 years, which provided the family livelihood. She calls gardening '*a wonderful combination of art, science and craft.*'

Gardening must have been in her genes, as despite already having an outdoor garden to play in, as a toddler she poured toy buckets of soil onto the lino on the kitchen floor to create one indoors. Perhaps this was an early indication that in 2018 she would be awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's highest accolade, **The Victoria Medal of Honour**. Last year the RHS named her Iconic Horticultural Hero.

In typically down to earth fashion, Carol explains (for those unaware of its origins) that lino, short for linoleum, which many of us grew up with, is made almost entirely from natural materials including linseed oil, pine resin and sawdust.

Carol describes herself as a city girl. Born in June 1945, she grew up mostly in Manchester, but always felt close to nature. Her father's parents' garden was enriched by horse manure. Another early memory is of watching her grandma break the sealing wax and untie the string on a small

brown paper parcel from Cornwall. Inside was a cardboard box containing pristine white flowers, single snowdrops, their stems wrapped in lush moss. *'Our noses took in the honeyed perfume mingled with the smell of the ancient earth. Have you noticed how people always close their eyes when they're smelling something?'*

The family moved often during Carol's childhood, living for a short time in Newcastle Upon Tyne in a brand-new prefab which had a small bare patch of land. A long time afterwards, she returned to the city and found the prefab still there – but *'all the gardens were a treat, having been tended and loved over the years. Though houses can be done up and changed, it is their gardens that make the place what it is: a dump or a des res.'*

'In Manchester we lived amongst coal mines and cotton mills, but there were snatches of nature here and there – little gardens and allotments, railway embankments and waste ground, all yielding flowers and leaves, fruit and seedheads.' Her granddad had a small business selling timber, and when she dressed up as Robin Hood for the *'Whit Walk'* he made her a bow from an aircraft rib. He had plenty of these stacked in his yard; his woodworking skills had been in demand in WW1, building wooden aeroplanes.

I was surprised to read that in the late 1950s employees at the mills still wore clogs to work. Regarding foot ware, Carol mentions her love of football, which was encouraged by her father to the extent of buying her a pair of football boots for her 11th birthday.

Although being disappointed at not being allowed to study biology at school, and disliking sewing and singing, she did well in English, French and Art. I enjoyed her descriptions of the natural world, such as this: *'Deciduous trees are calendars: one glimpse and its branches will indicate just where the year has reached, full of spring promise with new buds and impending blossom, celebrating the autumn cavalcade clothed in rich reds and oranges, or in stark silhouette against a caerulean winter sky.'*

Aged 15 Carol wanted to go to **Manchester College of Art and Design**, but being too young she became a *'shop girl'* instead, earning £3 per week selling buttons and *'nylons'* – tights were still 5 years in the future. One night she went to a party and chatted to a lad for ages, mostly about art; when the record *'Love Me Do'* was released she realised she'd been talking to **John Lennon**.

After several boring jobs she took her artwork to her local college of art in Bolton and despite not having an official interview she was given a place there. As she lived at home, the small grant she was awarded went to her dad, who wasn't very supportive, but eventually accepted her career choice. Directly behind the college was the derelict Manchester Bolton and Bury canal, where one day she discovered thousands of blue lupins in full bloom. She says, *'Nature paints us such perfect pictures – how do we dare ignore them, or worse still destroy them?'* Apparently, the Romans introduced lupins to Britain.

Carol moved on to **Newport Art College** to be near her then boyfriend, who was at Cardiff University. A later boyfriend from the S Wales valleys went to help at Aberfan when the spoil tip engulfed the village school in 1966.

After three years in Newport, she went to **Brighton College of Art** to study for an art teacher's diploma. She recalls that it was an exciting time: *'In the students' coffee bar across from the Royal Pavilion the jukebox played Jimi Hendrix all day long.'*

Carol found she liked teaching and it became her career for 13 years. By the late 1960s she was living in London and married Anthony, a fellow painter; for the wedding she wore a Chinese silk jacket embroidered with flowers. She was a part-time specialist art teacher at a junior school in Kilburn, and also taught part-time in a secondary school in Stepney, where the Kray brothers were active.

After divorcing Anthony, she went with a boyfriend to Rome where she worked for a while. On a trip to Sicily, she was overwhelmed to see thousands of anemones: *'I sat amongst them feeling part of them, part of the earth from which they sprang. They must have grown in just that way since time immemorial. People come and go but, if we do nothing to stop them, plants go on forever.'*

Returning to London, she taught at a large comprehensive in Shepherd's Bush and met Neil, whom she later married. When they moved to Devon, she was appointed Head of Art at a school in **South Molton**. *'The garden I have lived in, and loved, longest is the one at Glebe Cottage. As much as I made this garden, it made me.'* She saw it first on a snowy February morning after an art teachers' course in **Dartington**.

There was no garden then, just an acre of rough grass, weeds and brambles. A TV show would have called it a blank canvas. They hired a JCB for a day to pull old cars off the plot, which went to a scrap metal dealer. A Morris Minor stuck in a gully was squashed and stayed on site, covered over with rubble and earth! The cottage had no mains drainage, having a septic tank, nor any mains water. Their water came from a well in a field nearby until pipes were laid.

A neighbour lent Carol his scythe and showed her how to use it. *'Garden design has never been my strong suit. In some respects, the garden has designed itself. This place has told me what it wants to be and as it has grown and developed it continues to tell me. It has become a discussion. I have never had an overall vision of how it should be.'* Gradually the garden took shape, as she built a series of terraces on the sloping site.

Her garden contains several varieties of fern. *'Propagating ferns takes time and trouble, a wonderful reminder that gardening is not a question of turning out a product but rather of engaging in an ongoing process.'*

After her two daughters, Annie and Alice, were born Carol gave up teaching and started selling plants on a stall in **Barnstaple** market, along with home-made jam and wholemeal bread. They sold well, as did vegetables and soft fruit.

As her business grew, Carol called it **'Glebe Cottage Plants'** and extended operations by renting a 60' greenhouse from a neighbouring farmer. I was delighted to discover that 'Glebe Cottage Plants' supplied the plants for the herbaceous border during the restoration of the Sundial Garden in the Lost Gardens of Heligan in 1996. Over the next 17 years the nursery did shows at Chelsea, Hampton Court, Tatton Park, Malvern and Harrogate; they never showed the same display twice. While away at shows Carol missed her family, but it gave Neil a chance to discover he had a talent for cooking.

She describes what an overwhelming experience it was to walk into the old canvas marquee at Chelsea for the first time and see just an expanse of grass. Carol and her team were awarded their first Gold Medal in 1994, **'For Cottage Garden Plants'**. In total she won six Gold Medals there, but will never forget that first one: *'For once I was speechless – not for long though.'*

Several royals visited their stands, although one year she noticed one of the princes being shown round, when suddenly he was steered to the other side of the aisle. With her tongue firmly in her cheek Carol says, *'I was wearing a shocking pink culotte dress, a pair of Doc Martens, and had short punky red hair and big earrings. I'm sure my appearance had nothing to do with this redirection.'*

Her favourite pair of Doc Martens had steel toecaps but she didn't realise this until they set off an alarm at **Exeter Airport**; they were the culprits, not her two titanium replacement hips!

Carol never received any training for her TV presenting career. She began on Channel 4, for a programme called **'Garden Party'**, which was followed by **'Real Gardens'** and **'Wild About the Garden'**. The latter involved filming in the Highlands of Scotland on precipitous mountain ledges with an alpine specialist who was terrified of heights. In 2005 she was asked to present on **'Gardeners' World'** and has appeared in every series since. When **Monty Don** had a mini stroke in 2008, she stepped in as the main presenter.

After problems with her neighbour (and nursery landlord) she was forced to vacate the nursery, but she continued her writing career, and was the gardening correspondent for the **Guardian** for 5 years, which she loved. It surprised me to learn that this is her 11th book.



Carol in her award-winning garden

Image courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

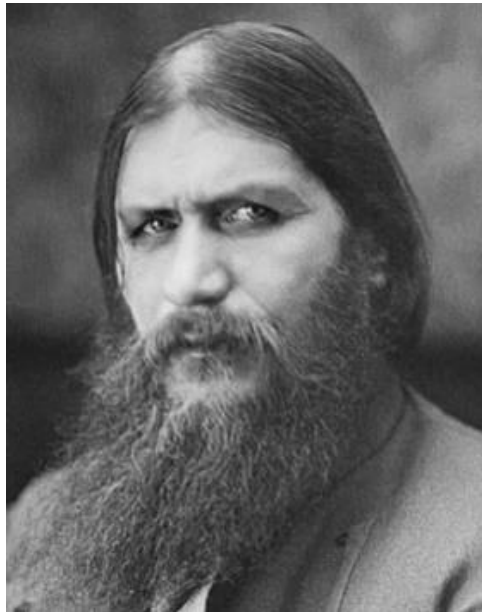
Even Covid 19 couldn't curb her enthusiasm for gardening, and she continued presenting programmes, as well as campaigning for gardening to be taught in schools. Her philosophy can be summed up in her response to the request to design a big *'show garden'* for **Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival** in 2023: *'It would be inspirational rather than aspirational, encouraging people to 'grow your own.'*

Carol describes herself as a confirmed atheist and doesn't want a funeral. She survived cancer earlier this year, having a double mastectomy, but recovered in time to present at **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**! She says, *'I still have a lot of living to do.'* I wonder if, when the time comes, her epitaph will be similar to that of **Gertrude Jekyll**: *'Artist. Gardener. Craftswoman.'*

In the introduction to his book **'The Lost Gardens of Heligan'** (1997) **Tim Smit** says, *'A garden is a symbol of humanity's arrogance, perverting nature to human ends.'* Those are strong words, and I'm not sure Carol or I would agree with him, but we gardeners must do the best we can.

Sue Amer

Maria Rasputin



Grigori Rasputin

Maria Rasputin, daughter of **Grigori Rasputin**, the faith healer whose influence over the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia is said to have contributed to their downfall, had her own extraordinary life. Her father, born into a peasant family in Siberia, had experienced a religious conversion whilst on a pilgrimage in 1897 however despite being described as a pilgrim, he recognised the importance of getting on in the world and took Maria and her sister Varvara to St Petersburg in the hope of social advancement.



Rasputin with his children



Maria photographed in 1911

Grigori persuaded Maria to marry Boris Soloviev, whom she did not like, as he was the son of Nicolai Soloviev, Treasurer of the Holy Synod. Although Boris had been lined up to be Grigori's successor,

after Grigori's murder, he and Maria were forced to flee after he defrauded several wealthy families by pretending a Romanov had escaped the family's assassination and needed to get to China. The famous Romanov jewels had also mysteriously disappeared.

Following the birth of their first daughter, Tatyana, in 1920, the family travelled via Ceylon and Suez to Prague, where they opened a Russian restaurant. Their second daughter, another Maria, was born while they were in Austria, then they moved onto Germany where Maria took dancing lessons. After the family's arrival in Paris, Boris worked in a soap factory, as a porter and as a car washer. He died of tuberculosis in 1926. Maria then worked as a dancer to support her two young daughters.

During this time, she tried to sue Felix Usupov and the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich for damages of \$800,000 over the murder of her father, of which she said '*any decent person would be disgusted by the ferocity of the killing.*' The claim failed as the French court said it had no jurisdiction over events in Russia. She also published the first of her three memoirs of her father, attempting to paint him and his life in a more favourable light. She also found the time to work in different circuses. In the Busch Circus she had to dance to '*the tragedy of her father's life*', confronting actors dressed as his assassins, and later in the Cirque d'Hiver as part of an act with a pony.



Maria being interviewed in 1930

After a brief stop in London in 1934, Maria moved to America where she worked as a lion tamer. Her daughters were denied entry to the US in 1938 and Maria was threatened with deportation. She seems to have escaped this by marrying Gregory Bernadsky, a childhood friend. They divorced in 1946 and Maria became a US citizen. She changed jobs again, working as a riveter in a shipyard, and later as a babysitter, working in hospitals and giving Russian lessons.

Maria told her children and grandchildren that Gregori Rasputin had been a generous man, teaching her to always leave home with money in her pocket to give to the poor. She claimed he was "*a simple man with a big heart and strong spiritual power who loved Russia, God and the Tsar.*"

Sue Hutt

Ref: Wikipedia

All photos courtesy of Wikipedia

A Tuscan Christmas

We were living in a remote village in the mountainous Garfagnana high in the Alpi Apuane where life had changed little over the centuries. Daily routines were still rigorously and necessarily adhered to and when winter gave little in the way of seasonal produce the local contadini turned to their livestock for food. After months of fattening on the sweet chestnuts that litter the forest floor the family pig was traditionally slaughtered to provide meat to grace the table throughout the coming year.

Our neighbour and friend Marco had invited me to his farm to help with the pig killing and as I didn't want to appear squeamish and as he promised a joint and a salami from his free ranging pigs, I had enthusiastically accepted the invitation.

The mile walk up the valley in the early morning frost warmed me and I was welcomed by Marco's parents and an enormous chap with fine red whiskers, check jacket and a shiny gun-shaped 'humane killer'. This was Marco's cousin, Giorgio, butcher and fellow horse-man. After much chat and fortified with espressos and grappa we set off in the Land Rover into the heart of the woods. It didn't take long to locate the two pigs that shared the tumble-down sty, and Marco's familiar shouts brought them crashing over the frozen puddles. They were enormous, I began to become a little apprehensive. What was I supposed to do? My half-formed questions dissolved when Giorgio turned and told me that my job was to keep the smaller of the two amused. Amused? Marco busied himself trying to get a rope around the selected beast's neck, Giorgio loaded the humane-killer. By this time the pigs knew that something was afoot and my charge decided to go for a bit of a gallop and the other one immediately set off with Marco hanging on to rope and tail. Suddenly we were all racing along, Giorgio managed to get a powerful arm around the pig's neck, his free hand holding the gun, Marco hung on to its tail and tried to dig his heels into the unyielding earth. My pig was hell-bent on running as close to her sister as possible, and I was trying to keep them separated by shouting and hitting her rather feebly and ineffectually with my scarf. We hurtled on for what seemed an hour until Giorgio with superhuman strength pushed the muzzle of the gun between the pig's eyes and pulled the trigger. She stopped dead.

Everything stopped, all that I could hear was the pounding of my heart. My pig careered off into the woods and I turned to the others. As I watched Giorgio produced a metal spike from the folds of his check jacket and with enormous force plunged it into the pig's chest. It shuddered and juddered and was then quite still. We were miles from the Land Rover so we constructed a simple stretcher and dragged the heaviest pig in Tuscany down the track, one last heave and she was unceremoniously dumped in the back.

When we got back to the farmhouse huge cauldrons of water were boiling on fires in the yard, the pig was rolled onto planks and we began to scald the skin and to shave it using razor sharp hunting knives. We had been joined by more friends and relatives and with everyone helping out the job was soon done. The shorn pig was then suspended under the eaves of the barn by its rear legs and carefully gutted, the trauma of the spike in the heart had pulled all the blood to the chest so it was bled in no time at all. After the draw had been removed and cleaned the animal was cleaved in two,

the two halves held together by the snout. She remained to hang for two days in the open refrigerator of the Tuscan hillside.

As dusk fell the fire in the kitchen was rekindled in preparation for an iron pot in which to boil spaghetti and I helped lay the table for the dozen or so folk who had congregated for supper. The pasta was tossed in oil and garlic and washed down with the local red wine, called Nero or Porco because the almost black hue is akin to the colour of pigs' blood. We were then served with the most remarkable combination of food, hot chestnut polenta the colour and consistency of porridge and boiled pig's bones of the same pale grey. The company set about their plates with obvious relish, holding up particularly choice bits of bone and cartilage for everyone to admire. I found the naturally sweet and cloying taste of chestnut and the salty, fatty liquid almost impossible to swallow. But with plenty of Porco and polite refusals of seconds I managed to consume, and survive, one of the nastiest dishes it has been my misfortune to encounter.

When I returned on Boxing Day morning the work on butchering had started. Giorgio was accompanied by his father and they were busy cleaning intestines for the sausages. This involved blowing up yards of the things, whether this had any practical purpose, or was just to amuse the company I couldn't tell. All of the animal was used, hams prepared, salted and hung on the rafters by the huge open fire in the kitchen, alongside were hung different shapes and sizes of salami. Various cuts of meat were distributed and two huge joints were seasoned and put in the outside oven with potatoes in olive oil, garlic and sage. The biggest task was making the sausages, even with a machine to force the minced meat into the skins it took an age to create a veritable mountain of spiced and seasoned strings of my favourite food.

The work done we sat down to one of those endless lunches around the kitchen table. As I got up to replenish my glass towards the end of a perfect meal the pig had the last word. The string holding one of the hams gave way and the massive haunch crashed down onto my chair, reducing it to a splintered heap. We viewed the demolition in superstitious silence, a close encounter from beyond the veil.

David Westby

“Never odd or even”
spelled backward is still
“Never odd or even”

Courtesy of Facebook

Adrian's pick of the month: Weather







All images courtesy of u3a Carrick photography group

Creative writing: A Day in the Life of a Giant

Once upon a time, dear reader, in the time of myth and legend there lived a big man named Finn McCool. Finn was Irish and many a public house has been named for him, even one in our own nearby Falmouth.

Well, to call Finn, 'big', is probably an understatement for legend has it that he was at least 54 feet tall and that's very, very big, isn't it?

Finn lived, some say for 300 years, very happily with his wife Oonagh in the land of Ireland. He loved hunting and fishing and helping his neighbours but above all he liked to live a quiet life – well don't we all dear reader, until someone annoys us? And so it was with Finn McCool.

Over the years Finn had often visited the very north of Ireland to a place on the coast where the land of Scotland could be seen. The explorer in Finn was roused by the sight and he longed to step across to Scotland and see what was going on but one thing Finn didn't like was getting his feet wet. As luck would have it in this part there were many chunks of unusual hexagonal slabs lying about. Much, much later geologists came to call the rock basalt.

Finn was a tidy giant and after a day fiddling about, he discovered that the rocks could be locked together in a pleasant pattern. Looking across the sea to far off Scotland he decided to make a stone pathway and keep dry.

Unfortunately, after an hour or two in construction another mighty big chap called Benandonner spotted Finn, guessed what he was up to and yelled out in a furious voice across the Irish Sea.

'Stay wer ye are ye dirty Irish leprechaun!'

Naturally Finn was offended by such unneighbourliness and yelled back,

'Nay, ye uncouth as a heiland coo, Scotsman.'

Then one day so enraged was Benandonner that with shaggy red hair flying wildly behind like a crazy kite and kilt swirling about his enormous bony knees the Scottish giant set out to 'sort' his maddening neighbour. Dear reader, it was a fearsome sight. Benandonner's feet crashed into the Irish sea and a great tsunami rose up causing monstrous waves to crash into the shores of Western Scotland and Northern Ireland. Great chasms in the rocks and flooded valleys came to be. It is now most beautiful but then it was unbelievably terrifying as rock broke against rock and pieces flew here and there causing mighty sparks which when mingled with Benandonner's flying red hair looked like a raging storm of fire.

Finn hadn't quite completed the causeway. He'd dropped rocks here and there, rocks which later were named Ailsa Craig and the Isle of Mann but after a few shouting matches with Benandonner, who was bigger than him, he vowed to cut his losses and stay at home. Finn was no fool and liked his peaceful life and his Guinness more than a battle with a crazy Scotsman even though he thought him a fool. Between you and me, I'd say Finn was pretty terrified.

Anyway, Benandonner was as wild as a bag of cats and arriving on the Irish shore set off to find Finn's house. Finn thought about hiding in his cave, later known as Fingal's Cave, but as I have already mentioned he didn't like getting his feet wet and his boat was being careened.

Luckily Finn who was not always sensible had chosen a very sensible and creative wife. Quick as a flash Oonagh swaddled Finn in the sail from the boat. He resembled a giant baby for he had a sweet face for a big man. Oonagh laid him to snooze in a crevasse much as a modern baby is set out to get the air. Luckily it was a lovely day. Benandonner crashed into the house, learned that Finn was out hunting and caught sight of the baby. Well, Benandonner took one look at Finn and ran reasoning that if baby was so huge Finn's size was unimaginable?

Furious Benandonner turned wrecker and smashed the tidy rocks of Finn's pathway, creating the chaotic littered beach we now call the Giant's Causeway.

PS. Author's note. *Geologists say that Ailsa Craig (colloquially know as Paddy's milestone) is a volcanic plug. When in the mists of time it erupted there must have been a great deal of fire, noise, shattered rocks, splashing, waves etc?*
And, who knows how myths and legends come to be?

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Creative writing: Windows

Thinking of Windows, I am reminded of a Television Sit-Com of many years ago, where a group of cave men, played by the 'Goodies', (I think), are trying to design a wheel to fit on the box, with handles, they had created. After much thought and discussion, they produced a square structure, made from four pieces of wood, which just didn't work when fitted to the barrow. Disgustedly, one of them picked it up and rammed it into a hole in the wall of the dwelling pronouncing it 'A W I N D O W'.

The frame for a window must have come before glass was invented - and then stained glass. Such a valuable invention as religious educators discovered, using coloured glass in Church and Cathedral windows to make illustrations, depicting Biblical stories, as a teaching aid for people who were unable to read. One of the finest examples is the wonderful Rose Window situated over the West door of Truro Cathedral. The very colourful circular design is divided into seven sections symbolising the seven days it took God to create the World, as told in Genesis. Nothing like a stained-glass window in Church, to waft one's mind off and away during a boring sermon.

Other memorable windows featuring in my life include my bedroom window in the family home, where our sweet Siamese cat, Tina, climbed up to and through, bringing her newly born kittens, one by one, to join me in bed, where I was enjoying a lie-in. I felt so honoured.

Sitting, watching television one evening, with the children tucked up in bed and, as I thought, asleep, I suddenly glimpsed out of the corner of my eye, a pyjama-clad leg shooting down the pole which suspended the porch over the front door. I leapt out of the chair and rushed to the door, to find a

very 'pleased-with-himself' six or seven-year-old son, saying he was just practising an escape route in case we ever had a fire! He had climbed out of his bedroom window, managed, somehow, to wrap himself round the pole and slide down – I still can't bear to think of the consequences had his plans gone awry. Thankfully he hasn't ever had to put this technique into action for real. Maybe this exploit inspired his derring-do nature which led to a life as a Royal Marine Commando – who knows?

Finally, I remember the windows round the turret at the top of my Grandparent's house near Chelmsford. They used to write to us telling how they were able to see the fires burning in London after a German bombing raid, nick-named '*The Blitz*', during World War Two. Chelmsford was also much targeted by German bombers, aiming for the Marconi factory and a Heinkel bomber, shot down by a Spitfire, landed in the orchard of their garden.

We were in India at the time, watching, through the windows of our cottage, clinging to the side of the mountain, the most amazing displays of nature's furious thunder and lightning rattling round the Himalayan mountains, with our mother trying to convince us '*What Fun*', as, petrified, we leapt into her bed for comfort!

Eleanor Holland

Creative writing: Tank

I keep an old poster in a tin of memories which I store in the loft.

The poster asks "*Have you seen Anthony Rogers?*" and underneath is a faded photograph of a chubby faced kid in his last school photograph. He is a larger than average child wearing a green and black striped tank top. I cannot remember a day when he didn't wear that top and because of this and his size, the kids on our street nicknamed him 'Tank'.

I haven't seen Tank since July 1977 when during a game of hide and seek amongst the clutter of a Silver Jubilee, street party, he vanished. Pumff Gone. He was eight years old.

On that day the Queen and Prince Philip were visiting our town as part of the yearlong silver jubilee celebrations and because the royal couple's route took them past the end of our road, our mums had organised a street party. Our council estate comprised of just one broad, grass lined street meandering in a grand arc between two main roads. On that day in July children who had been granted a day off school gathered with their mothers at the end of the street and I was amongst the throng, flag at the ready.

The Queen was later than expected and I remember wandering off to play cricket with my friends. At the widest part of our road where there was a clutch of garages for those fortunate enough to own a car, we used the base of a concrete lamppost for a wicket. To make a run we dashed from under the lamppost to the kerb on the other side of the road. Tank was there boasting of being the next Geoffrey Boycott hitting the ball harder than most, but because he waddled rather than ran, he was easy to bowl out.

Memories of my childhood can be vague, and I confuse when and where things happened, but the events leading up to the disappearance of Tank are entrenched through the telling and reliving of this story immediately after the event and over the days and years that followed.

Bored of cricket seven of us began playing hide and seek. David stood under our lamppost, placed his hands over his eyes and counted. We all ran in different directions, and I scabbled under one of the street party tables and hid behind the drape of a tablecloth. Peeking out I saw Tank running to the brick outhouse opposite his back door. All our homes had brick outhouses which were divided into two sections, one side for coal and the larger side for storage. It would have been a great place for Tank to hide amongst the deck chairs and old sideboards.

Tucked beneath the table I heard the cheering of people and realised the Queen was approaching. I broke cover and ran to the main road to find my mother and my sister gleefully waving their Union Jacks. The black domed car with its large windows passed by so slowly and the Queen and Prince Philip waved to me through the glass, and I waved furiously back. The Jubilee was over.

As our mothers dismantled the party and returned home to make tea for fathers yet to return from work, children regrouped on the street. My friends chose to sit on the kerb underneath the cricket lamppost and, on joining them, I found a lollipop stick with which to pick at the warm tar on the road whilst we chatted about our royal experiences. This is a vivid memory as later that evening when my mother was shouting at me for getting oily, black marks on my best dress, it was Tank's mother that rescued me by knocking on our door to ask if we had seen Tony.

"He was in the outhouse hiding when the Queen arrived." I offered. *"I don't know where he went next."*

And neither did anyone else for I was the last person to have seen him that day and every day after.

There was talk of a van and a man in a duffle coat. There was speculation about a school bus which drove off without passengers. There were sightings of Tank soon after he had disappeared and much later a man wrote to Tank's mother claiming to be Anthony. But Tank remains in his last hiding place, wherever that may be, and unlike the Queen and her family whose stories have unfolded over the years, Tank's story ended 13th July 1977.

Karen La Borde



Courtesy of Progressive Newsday & Facebook

Quiz

Bridges

1. How long does it take the bascules to go up on Tower Bridge?
2. Which bridge did an American buy by mistake in 1968?
3. Where is Clifton Suspension Bridge?
4. The Tay rail bridge connects which 2 towns?
5. Which bridge has the nickname 'The Coathanger'?
6. Brooklyn bridge connects Brooklyn with where?
7. The Tasman Bridge near Hobart crosses which river?
8. In which country is the longest bridge in Europe?
9. Which bridge has the nickname 'The Ladies Bridge'?
10. How many bridges are there on the drive to Key West from Miami?

British TV

1. What was the first programme to be broadcast on BBC2?
2. Where is Strictly filmed?
3. On which children's programme did Ant and Dec first work together?
4. Which is the longest running soap?
5. In which year was colour tv introduced in Britain?
6. What was the first advert on ITV?
7. Which Beatle narrated Thomas the Tank Engine?
8. Which is the longest running current affairs programme?
9. Where is Dad's Army set?
10. Which actor played Baldrick in Blackadder?
11. Who was the first singer on Top of the Pops?
12. Which Womble was named after a Scottish town?
13. Who has presented Eggheads since 2008?
14. What is the name of Postman Pat's cat?
15. Who wrote Line of Duty?

What colour is

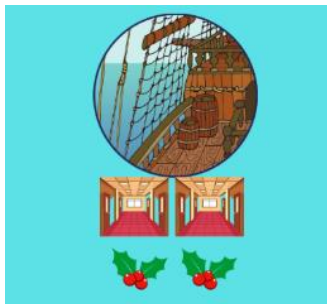
1. The door of 10 Downing Street?
2. The Peace rose?
3. A Post box in France?
4. A nursery rhyme's bell?
5. Andy Pandy's trousers
6. The Beatles' submarine?
7. The Japanese flag?
8. A kumquat?
9. The blood of an octopus?
10. The first a baby will see?
11. An aeroplane's black box?
12. A cremello horse?
13. Neptune?
14. Amethyst?
15. Vine Street in Monopoly?

[Answers on page 27](#)

Picture Quiz: Can you identify the carols?



1



2

Shh....



3



4



5



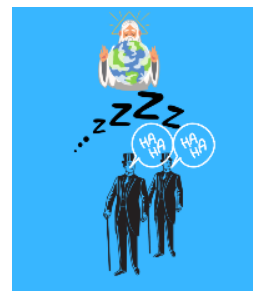
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7



8



9



10



11



12

[Answers on page 28](#)

Insults

Insults have been around since the beginning of language, however in the Middle Ages they developed into an art form. **Shakespeare** was a master at it.

They range from the simple: -

"I am sick when I do look at thee" (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

"Peace ye fat guts" (Henry 1V Part 1)

To the more obscure: -

"Come, come, you froward and unable worms!" (Taming of the Shrew)

The shorter and pithier ones perhaps have the most impact: -

"More of your conversation would infect my brain." (Coriolanus)

"Thine face is not worth sunburning." (Henry V)

"The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes." (The Comedy of Errors)



Oscar Wilde continued the tradition with his polished insults.

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; some whenever they go."

"She can talk brilliantly upon any subject, provided she knows nothing about it."

"A perfect saint amongst women but so dreadfully dowdy that she reminded one of a badly bound hymn book."

One wonders why they felt the need to be so insulting to others, spending time one assumes on choosing the exact words to convey their feelings or to put the words into their characters' mouths. Was it for comic effect perhaps, or to express the depth of their emotions? Both Shakespeare and Wilde may well have had time to polish their insults, but **Winston Churchill** was well known for his quick responses which were equally offensive, most famously perhaps for this one during a dinner party.

Lady Astor *"Winston, if you were my husband I would poison your tea."*

Churchill *"Madam, if I were your husband I would drink it."*

He had no qualms about who he insulted.

George Bernard Shaw *"I am enclosing two tickets for the opening night of my new show; bring a friend if you have one."*

Churchill *"Cannot possibly attend first night will attend second, if there is one."*

Perhaps the unkindest of all is this one.

Bessie Braddock *"Winston, you're drunk."*

Churchill *"You're right, Bessie, and you're ugly. But tomorrow morning I shall be sober."*

Cornwall in Old and New Images: The Bude canal



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Courtesy of Vintage GB & Facebook

Quiz answers

Bridges

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. How long does it take the bascules to go up on Tower Bridge? | 90 seconds |
| 2. Which bridge did an American buy by mistake in 1968? | London Bridge |
| 3. Where is Clifton Suspension Bridge? | Bristol |
| 4. The Tay rail bridge connects which 2 towns? | Dundee and Wormit |
| 5. Which bridge has the nickname 'The Coathanger'? | Sydney Harbour Bridge |
| 6. Brooklyn bridge connects Brooklyn with where? | Manhattan |
| 7. The Tasman Bridge near Hobart crosses which river? | The Derwent |
| 8. In which country is the longest bridge in Europe? | Portugal |
| 9. Which bridge has the nickname 'The Ladies Bridge'? | Waterloo Bridge |
| 10. How many bridges are there on the drive to Key West from Miami? | 42 |

British TV

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. What was the first programme to be broadcast on BBC2? | Playschool |
| 2. Where is Strictly filmed? | Elstree Studios |
| 3. On which children's programme did Ant and Dec first work together? | Byker Grove |
| 4. Which is the longest running soap? | Coronation St. |
| 5. In which year was colour tv introduced in Britain? | 1967 |
| 6. What was the first advert on ITV? | SR toothpaste |
| 7. Which Beatle narrated Thomas the Tank Engine? | Ringo |
| 8. Which is the longest running current affairs programme? | Panorama |
| 9. Where is Dad's Army set? | Walmington-on-Sea |
| 10. Which actor played Baldrick in Blackadder? | Tony Robinson |
| 11. Who was the first singer on Top of the Pops? | Dusty Springfield |
| 12. Which Womble was named after a Scottish town? | Tobermory |
| 13. Who has presented Eggheads since 2008? | Jeremy Vine |
| 14. What is the name of Postman Pat's cat? | Jess |
| 15. Who wrote Line of Duty? | Jed Mercurio |

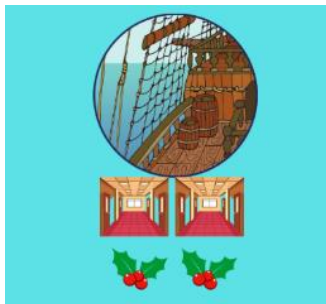
What colour is

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The door of 10 Downing Street? | Black |
| 2. The Peace rose? | Yellow edged with pink |
| 3. A post box in France? | Yellow |
| 4. A nursery rhyme's bell? | Silver |
| 5. Andy Pandy's trousers | Blue and white |
| 6. The Beatles' submarine? | Yellow |
| 7. The Japanese flag? | Red and white |
| 8. A kumquat? | Orange |
| 9. The blood of an octopus? | Blue |
| 10. The first a baby will see? | Red |
| 11. An aeroplane's black box? | Orange |
| 12. A cremello horse? | Cream |
| 13. Neptune? | Blue |
| 14. Amethyst? | Purple |
| 15. Vine Street in Monopoly? | Orange |

Picture Quiz answers



While Shepherds Watched



Deck the Halls

Shh....



Silent Night



I Saw Three Ships



Hark the Herald Angels Sing



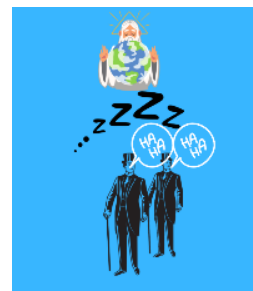
Go Tell It on the Mountain



See Amid the Winter Snow



We Three Kings



God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen



Little Donkey

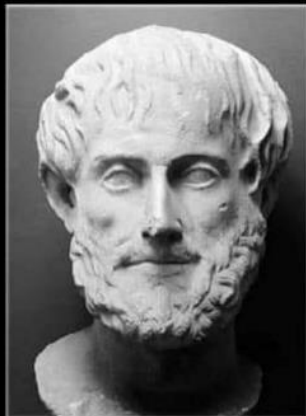


Torches



In the Deep Midwinter

Thoughts for the day



**“A fool contributes nothing
worth hearing and takes
offense at everything.”**

— Aristotle

PHILOSOPHICAL RHYTHMS



**“ When a true genius appears in the
world you may know him by this
sign; that the dunces are all in
confederacy against him.”**

~ Jonathan Swift

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 – Friday 20th December 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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