

# Nil Desperandum

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club

**ISSUE 7**    *October 2020*

*Isolated but not alone*



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## Here's a brain teaser that's very short and not extremely hard for adults



The author says: *This isn't really "extremely hard for adults". But it's a good puzzle: the premise is clear and simple to state, while the answer manages to be both surprising and evidently true once one has worked it out. Also, there are no tricks to it: it's a question of logic, plain and simple. Unfortunately, I don't remember where I got this from.*

**The Brain Teaser:** The two leading mathematicians in the kingdom, Alice and Bob, have run afoul of their tyrannical king. Rather than behead them outright, the king decides to prolong their misery by locking them in separate dungeons, so that any communication between them is impossible.

Each morning, a guard is to enter the corresponding dungeon and toss a coin so that the prisoner in that dungeon can see the outcome. Then the prisoner will be asked to guess the outcome of the coin toss in the other dungeon (i.e., Alice has to guess the outcome of the toss witnessed by Bob, and Bob has to guess the outcome of the toss witnessed by Alice). If at least one of the two prisoners guesses correctly, they will live to see another day. Otherwise they will be put to death forthwith.

It would seem that the mathematicians are doomed. But as they are being led away in chains Alice and Bob manage to confer for a brief moment and they agree on a strategy that will delay their execution indefinitely. What is the strategy?

**Bonus:** Once you've found the strategy, try to come up with the most succinct possible explanation of why it works.

The answer is given on the last page.

### Explanation:

The simplest way that I can see of explaining this solution is that the outcomes of the two coin tosses must be either the same or different, so one of the mathematicians should always guess that they were the same, and the other that they were different. It's irrelevant whether the coins are fair or not.

The solution is simple, but there's still a slightly magical flavour to it in my mind. What I find so remarkable is that, for the strategy to work, both Alice and Bob need to see the outcome of their own coin toss, even though it's totally uncorrelated with the outcome of the other's toss!

**Post-script (12 October 2017):** I forgot to mention that the puzzle has a happy ending. After a full year of one of the mathematicians guessing correctly every morning, the king, who understood very little about logic or mathematics, became convinced that Alice and Bob could communicate telepathically. Concerned that they might have other uncanny powers that they could use to harm him, he freed them under the condition that they leave the kingdom and never return.

**Attribution:** Found on Quora, 3/7/2020. By Original Author Alejandro Jenkins PhD, Physics, California Institute of Technology (Caltech) (Graduated 2006). Professor of Physics at the University of Costa Rica.

## On getting Old.

It's easy getting old, or so I've been told,  
It's just that I'm slower and a little less bold.  
I've had some fun and made mistakes,  
My body is good; it's just that it aches.

Looking forward doesn't seem too bright  
And looking back is simply hindsight.  
The days are quite long, the nights too short,  
Or is it the other way round?

At the end of the day, you'll sleep just as sound.  
So focus on now, there is only now.  
At least that's what they tell you, but they don't tell you how.

But it's not too late to learn and observe.  
It's not the same as 'in your day'. That you cannot preserve.  
So enjoy the change, unlearn and relearn,  
It's not better or worse, it's just 'their' turn.  
Age is a privilege, denied to the majority,  
Take time to reflect, you are your priority.



Contributed by Tony Warren

## Apple, Orwell and the Thought Police



What is the connection between Apple computers and George Orwell's 1984 dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four?

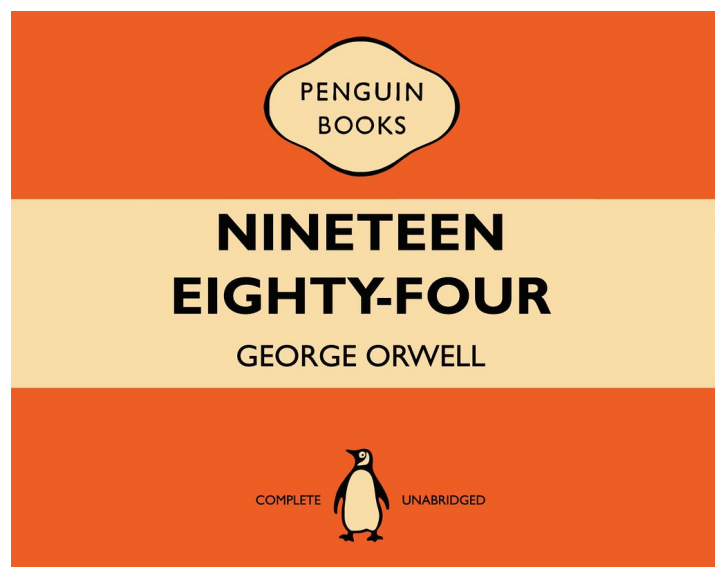
Apple launched their Macintosh computer on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1984. Their commercial is still revered as one of the greatest of all time. You have to see the advert to understand the Orwellian connection. It's [here](#).

**More from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia:**  
In Orwell's book, the Thought Police (Thinkpol) are the secret police of the superstate Oceania, who discover and punish thoughtcrime, personal and political thoughts unapproved by the government.

The Thinkpol use criminal psychology and omnipresent surveillance via informers, telescreens, cameras, and microphones, to search for and find, monitor and arrest all citizens of Oceania who would commit thoughtcrime in challenge to the status quo authority of the Party and the regime of Big Brother.

In the story, the Thinkpol conduct false-flag operations (e.g. The Brotherhood) to lure non-conformist members of the Party to expose themselves as politically subversive of Oceania. Orwell's concept of "policing thought" derived from the intellectual self-honesty shown by a person's "power of facing unpleasant facts"; thus, criticising the dominant ideology of British society often placed Orwell in conflict with ideologues, people advocating "smelly little orthodoxies".

In the year 1984, the government of Oceania, dominated by the Inner Party, use the Newspeak language to control the speech, actions, and thought of the population, by defining "unapproved thoughts" as crimes, thoughtcrime or crimethink; for such actions, the Thinkpol arrest Winston Smith, the protagonist of the story, and Julia, his girlfriend, as enemies of the state. Among the means for maintaining social control, the Thought Police are said by O'Brien, an inner Party member and agent of the Thinkpol, to operate a false flag resistance movement, the Brotherhood, to lure ideologically disloyal members of the Party to identify themselves for arrest.



As an agent provocateur, O'Brien gives Winston a copy of the forbidden book, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, authored by the enemy of the state Emmanuel Goldstein; yet the factual reality of The Brotherhood in Oceania remains uncertain, because O'Brien refuses to reveal to Winston whether it does, in fact, exist. Every member of the Outer Party has a two-way telescreen in their quarters, by which the Thinkpol audio-visually police the behaviour of the populace; listening for unorthodox opinions and spying for visible indications of mental stress indicating that the observed person is suffering an inner struggle (ownlife), such as the words spoken whilst asleep. The Thinkpol also spy upon and eliminate intelligent people, such as the Newspeak lexicographer Syme, who is disappeared and rendered an unperson, despite being an Ingsoc true-believer of fierce loyalty to Big Brother and the Party...

Picture Credit: "1984 Books George Orwell" by La Fabrique de Blogs is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



## To make you smile...

I came out of the chip shop with a meat/potato pie, large chips, mushy peas and a jumbo sausage. A poor homeless man, sitting there, said, "I've not eaten for two days."

I told him, "I wish I had your willpower!"

A large girl served me in McDonald's earlier in the year. She said, "Sorry about the wait." I said, "Don't worry dear. You might lose it eventually."

A woman had a medical examination at the doctor's surgery. "You are grossly overweight," he said. "I want a second opinion," she exclaimed. "OK. You're bloody ugly as well."

A car hit an elderly Jewish man. The ambulance driver said, "Are you comfortable?"

The man said, "I make a good living."

I just got back from a pleasure trip. I took my mother-in-law to the airport.

I've been in love with the same woman for 49 years. If my wife finds out, she'll kill me!

Someone stole all my credit cards, but I won't be reporting it. The thief spends less than my wife did.

My wife was at the beauty shop for two hours. That was only for the estimate. She got a mudpack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.

A doctor held a stethoscope up to a man's chest. The man asks, "Doc, how do I stand?"

The doctor said, "That's what puzzles me"

Patient: "I have a ringing in my ears." Doctor: "Don't answer"

A drunk was in front of the Magistrate. The Magistrate says, "You've been brought here for drinking."

The drunk says, "Okay, let's get started."



## Remember this?

It was 26 years ago. In Dublin, on 30 April 1994, Riverdance provided interval entertainment at the Eurovision Song Contest. It led to the creation of one of the most successful stage shows of all time and introduced the world to Irish dance and music. From the haunting vocals of anúna, the graceful elegance of Jean Butler, the explosive arrival of Michael Flatley and culminating in a long line of Irish dancers beating the stage in perfect heart-stopping harmony - a whole new genre of entertainment was born and many, many million audience members later - Riverdance still astonishes globally.

What you may not know is that Michael Flatley is a native of South Side, Chicago, USA. He is of Irish ancestry - his parents were both born in Ireland,



Watch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeFtzfSu0nI>

## The £2.99 Special



Picture Credit: "An elderly couple taking time out for a snack and watching passers by" by Steve Slater (used to be Wildlife Encounters) is licensed under CC BY 2.0

This story is about an elderly couple who went to breakfast at a restaurant after the lockdown easing where the 'seniors' special' was two eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast – all for £2.99.

'Sounds good,' the wife said. 'But I don't want the eggs..'

'Then, I'll have to charge you £3.49 because you're ordering a la carte,' the waitress warned her.

'You mean I'd have to pay for not taking the eggs?' my wife asked incredulously.

'YES!' stated the waitress.

'I'll take the special then,' the wife said..

'How do you want your eggs?' the waitress asked.

'Raw and in the shell,' the wife replied.

She took the two eggs home and baked a cake for her husband.

The message is DON'T MESS WITH SENIORS!!!

## Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers

While we're going down memory lane, how about this?



You can watch them at: <https://youtu.be/8MANfbqtZN0>

## Granma says



Think Positive - it keeps you young. For example, I fell down the stairs today and I thought WOW - that's the fastest I've moved in years.

Humour contributed by Alan Tatnall



Picture Credits:

← "Black Humour" by mikecogh is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

"Cheesy humour/ humor" by Can Pac Swire licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0 →



### Three good friends went for a swim



"Three good friends went for a swim.  
The one who was fat wished she was thin.

The one who was curvy wished she was clever.  
The one who was clever wished she swam better.

The really great swimmer wished she was witty.  
The one who was witty wished she was pretty.

All three friends thought the other two were just fine.  
If only they could let their own bright light shine.

So throw on your swimsuit if you're fat or you're thin.  
Enjoy fun and friendship .... love the skin that you're in! "

(Received via Facebook)

What a marvellous poem!

Gorgeous painting by: Watercolours by Rachel Toll

### Speeding

**Woman:** Is there a problem, Officer?

**Officer:** Ma'am, you were speeding.

**Woman:** Oh, I see.

**Officer:** Can I see your license please?

**Woman:** I'd give it to you but I don't have one.

**Officer:** Don't have one?

**Woman:** Lost it 4 times for drunk driving.

**Officer:** I see...Can I see your vehicle registration papers please?

**Woman:** I can't do that.

**Officer:** Why not?

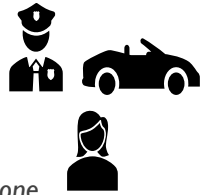
**Woman:** I stole this car.

**Officer:** Stole it?

**Woman:** Yes, and I killed the owner.

**Officer:** You did what?

**Woman:** His body parts are in plastic bags in the boot if you want to see.



The Officer looks at the woman, slowly backs away to his car, and calls for back up. Within minutes 5 police cars circle the car. A senior officer slowly approaches the car, clasp his half-drawn gun.

**Officer 2:** Ma'am, could you step out of your vehicle please!

The woman gets out of her vehicle.

**Woman:** Is there a problem sir?

**Officer 2:** One of my officers told me that you have stolen this car and murdered the owner.

**Woman:** Murdered the owner?

**Officer 2:** Yes, could you please open the boot of your car, please.

The woman opens the boot, revealing nothing but an empty trunk.

**Officer 2:** Is this your car, ma'am?

**Woman:** Yes, here are the registration papers.

The first officer is stunned.

**Officer 2:** One of my officer's claims that you do not have a driving license.

The woman digs into her handbag and pulls out her license and hands it to the officer. The officer examines the license and looks quite puzzled.

**Officer 2:** Thank you ma'am, one of my officers told me you didn't have a license, that you stole this car, and that you murdered and hacked up the owner.

**Woman:** I bet the liar told you I was speeding too.



### Love Letter to Husband

My darling husband,

Before you return from your business trip, I just want to let you know about the small accident I had with the pick-up truck when I turned into the driveway.

Fortunately, it's not too bad and I really didn't get hurt, so please don't worry too much about me.

I was coming home from Wal-Mart, and when I turned into the driveway I accidentally pushed down on the accelerator instead of the brake.

The garage door is slightly bent, but, fortunately, the pick-up came to a halt when it bumped into your car.

I am really sorry, but I know with your kind-hearted personality you will forgive me. You know how much I love you and care for you, my sweetheart. I am enclosing a picture of the damage for you.

I cannot wait to hold you in my arms again.

Your loving wife.

XXX



**P.S. By the way, your girlfriend called.**

### When Insults Had Class

These glorious insults are from an era before the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words.

"If you were my husband I'd poison your tea," said Lady Astor to Churchill. "If you were my wife, I'd drink it," he replied

A member of Parliament said to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease." "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire," said Winston Churchill.

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure," said Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary," said William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it," said Mark Twain.

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends," said Oscar Wilde.

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend... if you have one," said George Bernard Shaw writing to Winston Churchill.

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second... if there is one." - Winston Churchill, in response

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here," said Stephen Bishop

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivia," said Irvin S. Cobb.

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others," said Samuel Johnson.

"He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up," said Geoff Thompson.

"In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily," said Charles, Count Talleyrand.

"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?" said Mark Twain.

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork," said Mae West.

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go," said Oscar Wilde.

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it," said Groucho Marx.

### Obituary in the London Times

Today, we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, *Common Sense*, who has been with us for many years.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- And maybe it was my fault.

*Common Sense* lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

*Common Sense* lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

*Common Sense* lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

*Common Sense* took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

*Common Sense* finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

*Common Sense* was preceded in death:

- by his parents, Truth and Trust,
- by his wife, Discretion,
- by his daughter, Responsibility,
- and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 5 stepchildren;

- I Know My Rights
- I Want It Now
- Someone Else Is To Blame
- I'm A Victim
- Pay me for Doing Nothing

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

### QUIZ for October

Contributed by our own Quizmaster,  
David Waite



1. What acid is known by the molecular formula  $H_2SO_4$ ?
2. British Airways was formed by the amalgamation of which two main British Airline Companies?
3. Apart from Cambridge, where is the other Cathedral City in Cambridgeshire?
4. In physics, the formula denoting density = mass divided by what?
5. Which German composer wrote the music named *The English Suites*?
6. Which is the nearest Thames bridge to Tate Britain (formerly Tate Gallery)?
7. Can you name three early and famous Greek philosophers living circa fourth century BC?
8. Who wrote the book *'Around the World in Eighty Days'*?
9. When was The Great Fire of London.
10. What is the distance in miles between Dover and Calais?
11. What English word is derived from the Latin word 'Pugna' to fight.
12. What English word is derived from the French word La Poule the chicken.
13. In which county is The Forest of Dean.
14. What is meant by the word semiotics and how does it relate to English grammar.
15. Which famous William Shakespeare play commences with the following lines:  
*Oh, for a muse of fire that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention a kingdom for a stage, princes to act and monarchs to behold the swelling scene then should the warlike Harry assume the port of Mars.*
16. How many objects in a baker's dozen?
17. Why do people (particularly the elderly) get ringing in their ears?
18. In what year did Christian Constantinople fall to the Ottoman Turks invasion.
19. Who was the lead actor in the TV series *Fawlty Towers*?
20. What is The Law Society?

The answers are on the last page

### What does 'inanition' mean?

[noun]

It means exhaustion from lack of nourishment; starvation. Or lack of vigour; lethargy.

It is derived from from the Late Latin *inānītio* emptiness, comes from Latin *inānis* empty.

Source: Dictionary.com



## The Frabjous Words Invented by Lewis Carroll

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898), was better known by his pen name of Lewis Carroll. He was an English writer of children's fiction, notably *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass*. He was noted for his facility at word play, logic, and fantasy.

When we think of Lewis Carroll, we think of whimsical worlds ... and words. The man who penned *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-Glass*, "*Jabberwocky*," and countless other timeless poems and works of literature has taken our imaginations to the furthest limits for decades. His stories—published during the mid- to late-1800s—are full of life, adventure, humour, and some fantastical words. You see, Carroll wasn't just a great wordsmith, he was a great word inventor. He loved to sprinkle in the most delightful nonce words when those in the English language just wouldn't quite do.

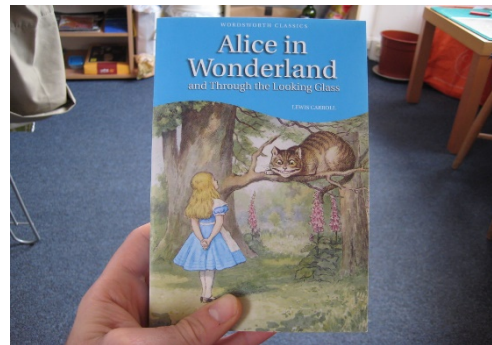
Here are some wonderful words Carroll is credited with.

**Portmanteau:** While the word portmanteau already existed, a portmanteau word was first coined by Carroll. The definition of portmanteau is "a case or bag to carry clothing in while traveling, especially a leather trunk or suitcase that opens into two halves." Carroll took that and applied it to words, and a portmanteau word is a word that has been made by blending two words together. Think brunch (breakfast and lunch), smog (smoke and fog) and spork (spoon and fork) .

**Frumious:** One such portmanteau word Carroll coined was frumious—a mix of fuming and furious. He used it in his famous poem "*Jabberwocky*" to describe the "*frumious Bandersnatch*." As Carroll explained in the preface of his long poem *The Hunting of the Snark*: "Make up your mind that you will say both words, but leave it unsettled which you will say first. Now open your mouth and speak. If your thoughts incline ever so little towards 'fuming,' you will say 'fuming-furious,' if they turn, by even a hair's breadth, towards 'furious,' you will say 'furious-fuming;' but if you have the rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say 'frumious.'"

**Bandersnatch:** Speaking of that frumious beast, Carroll introduced the world to the Bandersnatch in his poem "*Jabberwocky*" and brought it to life again in *The Hunting of the Snark* (when a banker encounters it while hunting the Snark). "*But while he was seeking with thimbles and care, A Bandersnatch swiftly drew nigh And grabbed at the Banker, who shrieked in despair, For he knew it was useless to fly.*" Today the word, when used with a lowercase B, is a noun meaning "an imaginary wild animal of fierce disposition" or "a person of uncouth or unconventional habits, attitudes, etc., especially one considered a menace, nuisance, or the like." For example, you might call your eccentric aunt who offends everyone at every turn the bandersnatch of Thanksgiving.

**Snark:** Speaking of snark, credit for that word goes to Carroll too, which first appeared in his aforementioned poem about these crazy creatures. While the first definition of the word is "a mysterious, imaginary animal," today we use it more often in the sense of "to be critical in a rude or sarcastic way," as in a snarky comment. But a snark hunt sounds like a lot more fun.



Picture Credit: "Alice in Wonderland" by Xesc is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

**Boojum:** As for snarks that are particularly dangerous, Carroll dubbed them *Boojum*. We don't use the word a lot today in everyday conversation, but it does lend its name to a Bigfoot-like creature who favors pretty girls and gemstones in the Carolina Smoky Mountains—the legend of Boojum—as well as a popular Irish burrito chain and a tree native to Baja, California.

**Slithy:** We can think of plenty of politicians who might be described as slithy. As Carroll explained in *Through the Looking-Glass*: "Well, 'slithy' means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word."

**Chortle:** Who doesn't love a good chortle? A verb defined as "to chuckle gleefully," it's a blend of chuckle and snort. Carroll first brought us this word in *Through the Looking-Glass* as well. Just hope you're not drinking milk when a chortle comes about.

**Galumph:** If you're moving along heavily or clumsily, you may be said to be galumphing. A blend of gallop and triumphant, Carroll used it in *Through the Looking-Glass* to describe the *Jabberwock* slayer: "*He left it dead, and with its head / He went galumphing back.*"

**Frabjous:** Oh, what a frabjous word this is! *Frabjous* means "wonderful, elegant, superb, or delicious." Carroll likely created it to combine fabulous and joyous. He used it to describe the day the *Jabberwock* was killed: "*O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!*"

**Mimsy:** Mimsy isn't any kind of compliment. It means "*prim, underwhelming, and ineffectual.*" A blend of miserable and flimsy, you don't want to have a mimsy excuse for why you didn't get your work done in time. That would not make for a frabjous day.

**Burble:** In the poem "*Jabberwocky*," the *Jabberwock*, "*with his eyes of flame ... burbled as it came!*" As memorable as the word is for us, Carroll reportedly didn't remember creating it. In a letter, however, he said it likely was a combination of bleat, murmur and warble. Today, we use the word burble as verb meaning "to make a bubbling sound; bubble" or "to speak in an excited manner; babble." So, your water fountain may burble, as may your BFF when they get so excited to tell you what they just heard. Though they may not have coined any frabjous words, these authors are well-known for the names of their famous characters! But if you're looking for something with more snark, check out some of literature's most lovable grumps.

The post *The Frabjous Words Invented By Lewis Carroll* appeared first on [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com).

## The Radio

Here are some oldies to bring the memories flooding back...



(Picture Credit: Wikipedia)

**Dick Barton – Special Agent** was a radio thriller serial broadcast in the BBC Light Programme between 7<sup>th</sup> October 1946 and 30<sup>th</sup> March 1951. Produced and directed by Raymond Raikes, Neil Tuson, and Charles Lefaux, it was aired in 15-minute episodes at 6.45 (later 6.15) each weekday evening. In all, 711 episodes were produced and the serial achieved a peak audience of 15 million.

The serial followed the adventures of ex-Commando, Captain Richard Barton MC (Noel Johnson, later Duncan Carse and Gordon Davies) who, with his mates Jock Anderson (Alex McCrindle) and Snowy White (John Mann), solved all sorts of crimes, escaped from dangerous situations, and saved the nation from disaster time and again. Dick Barton's (played by Don Stannard) has plans for a relaxing seaside holiday with his friends but is thwarted when they stumble upon a sinister Nazi plot to unleash a deadly chemical virus and bring the nation to its knees. Listen to the episode [here](#) as Dick and his team try to save the day.



(Picture Credit: Wikipedia)

**Journey into Space** was a classic 1950s sci-fi from Charles Chilton set in the unimaginably far-flung (at the time) future of 1965.

*Journey into Space*, first aired in 1953, was the last radio programme in the UK to attract a larger

evening audience than television. The programme was translated into 17 languages (including Hindustani, Turkish and Dutch) and broadcast worldwide.

Listen to Episode I of *Journey Into Space: The Red Planet* at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsyT-0763bA>

## Opportunity Knocks



Not to miss an opportunity (forgive the pun), *Opportunity Knocks* was a British television and radio talent show originally hosted by Hughie Green, with a late-1980s revival hosted by Bob Monkhouse, and later by previous winner Les Dawson. It was first launched on BBC radio in 1949 when it gave a lift up the ladder of fame to (amongst others) Spike Milligan and Frankie Vaughan. Listen to an early recording, [here](#).

Hughie Green presented the programme on TV from 1956 through to 1977. Thousands of hopefuls auditioned for the show and of those who appeared on the show some went on to become famous such as Les Dawson, Freddie Starr, Little and Large, and Frank Carson.

## Carroll Levis and his Discovery Show



Carroll Richard Levis (1910 to 1968) was a talent scout, impresario and television and radio personality. Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and brought up in Vancouver, he moved to England in 1935 and joined the BBC, where he hosted a regular programme

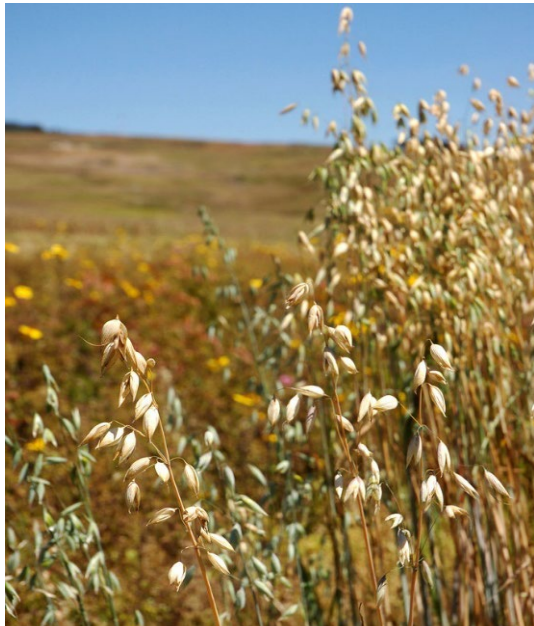
showcasing unknown performers discovered through his touring stage show – a bit like wartime *Britain's Got Talent*. In the 1950s he hosted a talent competition for young people called *The Carroll Levis Discovery Show*.

Watch what it was like at:

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-discoveries-1939-online>

## The development of Crop Rotation

Picture Credit: "Oats in conservation agriculture crop rotation, Mexico" by CIMMYT is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crop\\_rotation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crop_rotation)

'Crop rotation' is the practice of growing a series of different types of crops in the same area across a sequence of growing seasons. Growing the same crop in the same place for many years one after another, gradually depletes the soil of certain nutrients and selects for a highly competitive pest and weed community. Without balancing nutrient use and diversifying pest and weed communities, the productivity of monocultures is highly dependent on external inputs. Conversely, a well-designed crop rotation can reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers and herbicides by using ecosystem services from a diverse set of crops. Additionally, crop rotations can improve soil structure and organic matter, which reduces erosion and increases farm system resilience.

Quite simply, crop rotation reduces reliance on one set of nutrients, pest and weed pressure, and increases the probability of the avoiding the development of resistant pests and weeds. Growing the same crop in the same place year after year, will cause a build-up of pests and diseases specific to that crop. Once you realise that different crops consume different levels of nutrients from the soil and that ultimately the nutrients become unbalanced (less of one nutrient but an excess of another), the idea of crop rotation makes solid sense.

### History

Agriculturalists have long recognised that suitable rotations—such as planting spring crops for livestock in place of grains for human consumption—make it possible to restore or to maintain a productive soil. Ancient Near Eastern farmers practiced crop rotation in 6000 BC without understanding the chemistry, alternately planting legumes and cereals. In the Bible, chapter 25 of the Book of Leviticus instructs the Israelites to observe a "Sabbath of the Land". Every seventh year they would not till, prune or even control insects.

Author Valerie Hansen, in her book: *The Year 1000: When Explorers Connected the World—and Globalization Began* (pages 19/20), wrote:

*"The population of Western Europe also rose as the residents adopted far-reaching changes in agriculture, which the British historian R. I. Moore has called 'cerealization.' They planted more and more land with wheat and barley. In northern France and England, cultivators first recognised that raising the same crop in a given field year after year lowered its fertility, so they allowed one third to one half of their land to lie fallow.*

*"After 1000, farmers began alternating their crops. One popular rotation was turnips, clover, and grain, which helped retain nutrients and soil quality. This practice, so important for raising agricultural yield, spread only slowly (it was already well known in China). At the same time, other innovations also increased output: horse-drawn ploughs, water mills, windmills, and iron tools that could dig deeper into the soil than wooden tools. Before cerealization, most of the land in Western Europe was not under regular cultivation; afterward much of it was.*

*"In addition to raising population, these changes contributed to the rise of settled communities in Europe. Before the growing of grain became widespread, many farmers in Western Europe had been itinerant, moving from place to place to work the land and raise livestock. This continued to be true of farmers in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, who followed their herds of pigs, goats, sheep, cattle, and horses. But first in France, England, and Germany, and later in Eastern and Northern Europe, farmers began to build houses and settle down in villages, thanks to crop rotation and other agricultural advances.*

### Systems

Over time, rotation systems have developed from a two-field system to a four-field system. For example, under a two-field rotation, half the land was planted in one year, while the other half lay fallow. Then, in the next year, the process was reversed. The three and four-field systems follow the same process except fields are divided into three and four parts, respectively. There are numerous factors that must be taken into consideration when planning a crop rotation: planning an effective rotation requires weighing fixed and fluctuating production circumstances: market, farm size, labour supply, climate, soil type, growing practices, etc. Moreover, a crop rotation must consider in what condition one crop will leave the soil for the succeeding crop and how one crop can be seeded with another crop.

Crop rotation makes a difference. But to get the best out of the soil, there are other factors too. In 1700, British gentleman farmer Jethro Tull invented the seed drill and thereby helped bring about a revolution in British farming. His horse-drawn seed economically sowed the seeds in neat rows (he later developed a horse-drawn hoe) and his methods were adopted by many farmers and helped to provide the basis for modern agriculture. Tull's mechanical innovations were accompanied by a theory of plant nutrition including his rejection of the value of manures in maintaining soil fertility.

### Against the grain...

Source: Page 62, National Trust Magazine Autumn 2020

The National Trust Magazine (Autumn 2020) has an article about nature thriving at Lodge Farm on the Harewoods Estate in the Surrey Hills where tenant farmer Mike Pinard grows varieties of heritage wheat as has been done since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest varieties, which can reach 5ft, have been planted there since 1650. A low-impact technique is used, called 'no till' farming. The farmer explains:

*"The method of 'no till' farming is not new. It borrows its technique from nature. We sow seeds directly into the earth using a special drill, which disturbs as little soil as possible. The drill cuts through old vegetation and creates a slot in the ground. Seeds are blown into the slot and a following wheel closes it and firms the ground around the seed. The old vegetation is left on the surface to feed the citizens of the soil (such as bacteria, fungi, worms and beetles) as the nutrients and organic matter end up back in the earth. This method sequesters a lot of carbon from the atmosphere as well."*

No-till and strip-tillage are both forms of conservation tillage. No till is the practice of never tilling a field. Tilling every other year is called rotational tillage. 'No till' farming, which started in the 1940s, is also known as zero tillage or direct drilling - it decreases the amount of soil erosion that tillage causes in certain soils, especially in sandy and dry soils on sloping terrain. Tillage may be dominant in agriculture today, but no-till methods can be successful too. In some cases, minimum tillage or 'low-till' methods combine till and no-till methods. For example, some approaches may use shallow cultivation (i.e. using a disc harrow) but no ploughing.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins



## What is something electrical engineers know that others don't?

Source: Article by Rahul Arya on Quora.com

What are these cylindrical components on your laptop/camera power cord? These magical components are known as **ferrite beads**. This is what they look like:



### Why is it used?

A long cable conductor acts as an antenna and has the capability to transmit/receive unwanted signals (most importantly radio frequency noise).

As an example, do you remember the annoying noise originating from your TV speaker while you were talking on your GSM mobile? If yes, then it is nothing but your speaker wire acting as an antenna for mobile signals. The ferrite bead is clamped over the current carrying conductor and it pretty much solves the high frequency problem.

### How does it work?

It is very simple in construction and has a simple passive inductor made of ferritic material core. It offers resistance (actually it is 'reactance') to the high frequency signals and in turn dissipates the signal as heat. The heat generated is not significant enough to bother you and it is how it solves the problem associated with radio frequency signals.

## Unusual Word: 'Somnambulism'

Source: Dictionary.com

Somnambulism is a noun and means 'sleepwalking'.

### Etymology

The word *Somnambulism* comes via the French *somnambulisme* from New Latin *somnambulismus*, a pretty transparent compound of the noun *somnus* "sleep" and the verb *ambulāre* "to walk, take a walk, stroll," source of English *amble*.

In Latin, the derivative noun *swepnos* (or *swopnos*) becomes *sopnos*, then *somnus*. The derivative noun *supnos* becomes *hýpnos* in Greek. Another derivative noun, *swep-os-*, becomes *sopor-* "sleep" in Latin (via *swop-os-*, then *sopor-*), as in English *soporific* "causing sleep."

*Somnambulism* entered English at the end of the 18th century.

## Battle of Britain



Picture Credit: "Spitfire takeoff" by Jez B is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The Battle of Britain (German: *die Luftschlacht um England*, "the Air Battle for England") was a military campaign of the Second World War, in which the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Fleet Air Arm (FAA) of the Royal Navy defended the United Kingdom (UK) against large-scale attacks by Nazi Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe. It has been described as the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces.

Britain officially recognise the battle's duration as being from 10<sup>th</sup> July until 31<sup>st</sup> October 1940, which overlaps the period of large-scale night attacks known as the Blitz, that lasted from 7<sup>th</sup> September 1940 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 1941. German historians do not accept this subdivision and regard the battle as a single campaign lasting from July 1940 to June 1941, including the Blitz.

After Poland's defeat by the Nazis in September 1939, tens of thousands of Polish servicemen made their way to France to continue the struggle against a common enemy. The Polish Air Force (PAF) was recreated and established on French soil following a number of agreements between the French government and the Polish government-in-exile.



Picture Credit: "Polish Fighter Pilots" by Abaraphobia is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The first Polish pilots reached Britain on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1939, just over 3 months after the start of World War II. A total of 145 experienced and battle-hardened Polish airmen fought in the Battle of Britain - 79 airmen in various RAF squadrons, 32 in No. 302 (Polish) Fighter Squadron and 34 in No. 303 (Polish) Fighter Squadron. In the 1960s, through work, I met one of these brave men after he became a client. When the war was over, he chose to remain in England, and we became good friends.

## Komodo Dragons

Source: mainly from an article on Quora by Serge Elia

Picture Credit: "Komodo Dragon - London Zoo" by Jason M Parrish is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0



The Komodo dragon (there's one shown above), also known as the Komodo monitor, is a species of lizard found in the Indonesian islands of Komodo, Rinca, Flores, and Gili Motang. A member of the monitor lizard family *Varanidae*, it is the largest extant species of lizard, growing to a maximum length of 3 metres in rare cases and weighing up to approximately 70 kilograms.

The world's largest lizard is dangerous. Once thought to have toxic bacteria in its saliva to kill its prey, it has been established that it possesses actual venom rather than harmful bacteria, exactly like venomous snakes. Sure enough, that venom can rapidly decrease blood pressure, increase blood loss and hypothermia, and render the victim too weak to escape, let alone retaliate. Consequently, no animal, however large or dangerous or insignificantly small, is safe from the Komodo dragon's powerful venom.

It's not only the venom you need to worry about. In addition to their powerful venom, Komodo dragons have 60 sharp, serrated teeth in their jaws, each about 2.54 cm long. These teeth are ideal for launching an attack and inflicting a nasty bite. However, a Komodo dragon's bite-force is rather weak when compared to other predators (around 500 pounds per square inch, compared to a saltwater crocodile that can deliver a fatal bite of around 3,700 pounds per square inch). When hunting prey, the bite-force is compensated for by the venom. Ouch!!

## 'Poem of the week'

From *The Mid Sussex Times*, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1941  
(Via subscription to British Newspaper Archive)

Two travellers fared life's rough road,  
One hurried day after day,  
With always the wish getting ahead,  
Never throwing a moment away.

The other stopped often to turn afield,  
And gather sweet flowers there,  
And often he halted to hear the song,  
Of a bird on bough somewhere.

And often he lingered to lend a hand,  
Or help with a word of cheer,  
And often, when pitiful tales were told,  
Patiently stayed to hear.

One traveller came to the end of the road,  
Fulfilled his ambition to fall,  
At the goal disappointed regretting the price,  
He had paid for it, after all.

The other had gladness along the way,  
And ever, as each day sped,  
Kept journeying on, but never to reach,  
The goal that was far ahead.

*The Mid Sussex Times* 13<sup>th</sup> May 1941

Advert by Wood's (presumably a cycle shop) in Queen's Road, Haywards Heath:

Padding your feet in the "briny," you'll now have to shun  
'Till sea shores are freed, at defeat of the Hun,  
So explore pleasant country and beautiful lanes,  
Get that bike down at WOOD'S—laugh at buses and trains.  
HAYWARDS HEATH is a town for value renowned,  
And QUEEN'S is the ROAD, where best bargains are found.

## The Arctic is on fire — and that's bad news for climate change

Sources: <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/34/20438> and <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02568-y>

Fires in the Arctic are releasing record levels of carbon dioxide, partly because they are burning ancient peatlands that have been a carbon sink. I knew there were fires in California but reports about wildfires that are incinerating tundra along the Arctic Circle in summer 2020 was news to me. Intense wildfires are sweeping across the area, surpassing the numbers recorded in mid-2019, amid "exceptionally high" temperatures in the Siberian region.

*The Independent* ([here](#)) reported that NASA satellite images revealed fires dotted across the landscape and billowing clouds of smoke which scientists say will "catch a ride on the jet stream to other areas of the globe". The fires burn unabated as Siberia is largely inaccessible and sparsely populated. What is particularly worrisome is that the Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the world.

The Arctic wildfires released a record 244 megatonnes of carbon dioxide — 35% more than in 2019 which itself was also a record breaker. Scientists think the fires are so bad in part because they're torching peatlands, which have accumulated carbon over many millennia, making them the most carbon-dense ecosystem on Earth, thus cooling the global climate. An estimated 3.4million acres were burning (September 2020).

## Quotations to Inspire Success in Your Life

*Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.*

- **Winston S. Churchill**

*Try not to become a man of success. Rather, become a man of value.*

- **Albert Einstein**

*if you really look closely, most overnight successes took a long time.*

- **Steve Jobs**

*The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere.*

- **Barack Obama**

## Embarrassing Speech Blunders

If you've ever hit your *bunny phone* (and not your *funny bone*) or commented that "flying saucers are an *optical conclusion*," you've obviously made a comical speech **blunder**. These types of slip-ups happen when letters get switched around in your mind and your mouth.

Even our lapses in **locution** have specific names. Is it a *mondegreen* when you mishear a song lyric or bungle an idiom? Why does your brother say *escape goat* instead of *scapegoat*?

Dictionary.com can help you to distinguish between these mistakes and others. Get out your red pens and get ready to correct the most popular speech blunders!

For example:

### parapraxis

"Would you like some **butter** on your bed?" Surely that isn't what you mean. Are you hungry? If so, you've simply stumbled across a **parapraxis**.

From the Latin *para* meaning "beside" and the Greek *praxis*, for "a doing," a *parapraxis* is an instance in which you say one thing and mean your mother ... er, another.

The term is most commonly known as a **Freudian slip** and was deeply instrumental in the work of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in determining his patient's hidden intentions and desires.

Excerpted from **Dictionary.com**

## Rules for being human

1. You will receive a body. You may love it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period this time around.
2. You will learn lessons. You are enrolled in a full-time school called life. Each day in this school, you will learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.
3. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of trial and error experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much part of the process as the experiment that ultimately "works".
4. A lesson is repeated until it is learned. A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can then go on to the next lesson.
5. Learning lessons doesn't end. Every part of life will contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are more lessons to be learned.
6. "There" is no better than "here". When your "here" has become "there", you simply obtain another "there" that will, again, look better than "here".
7. Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about a person unless it reflects something you love or hate about yourself.
8. What you make of life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you, the choice is yours.
9. Life is exactly what you think it is. You create a life which matches your beliefs and expectations.
10. The answers lie inside you. The answers to life's questions lie inside you; all you need do is look, listen, and trust.
11. You will forget all this.
12. You can remember it whenever you want.

**Attribution:** Dr. Cherie Carter-Scott and Dan Millman. 1992

**Contributed by Tony Warren**



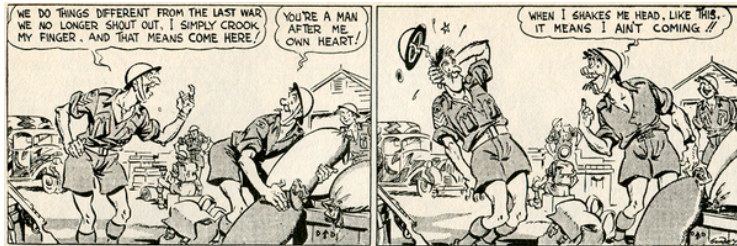
## Limerick: 'Portside'

There was a young man from Portside  
Who fell down a sewer and died.  
His unfortunate brother  
Fell down another  
And now they're interred side by side



## A window into the past

Posted by Bernard Doyle on Quora [here](#).

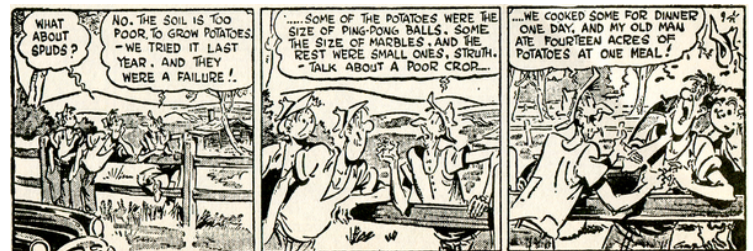
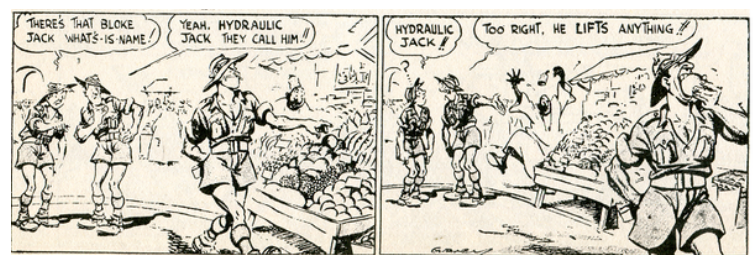
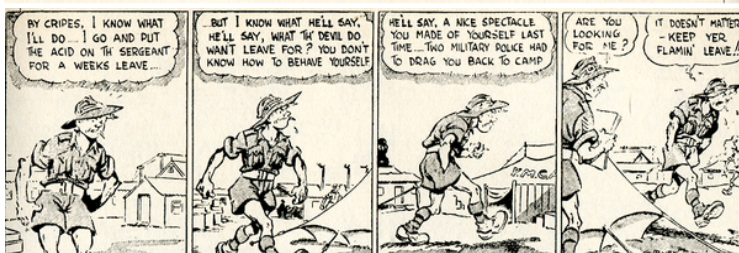
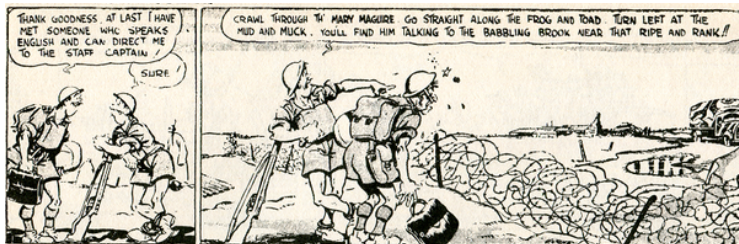


My favourite historical comic strip is "Bluey and Curley. The central characters were two privates in the Australian Army during World War 2 - Bluey, a veteran of the Great War who had re-enlisted and Curley, who was a new recruit. The comic strip was started in 1939. It was a huge hit among Australian servicemen as well as the general public and was widely syndicated in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

After 1945, the strip was continued with Bluey and Curley returning to civilian life. Gurney died in 1955, but the strip continued briefly with Australian cartoonists Norman Rice (1955-1956) and then Les Dixon (1956 - 1975) drawing the strip and writing the jokes. Rice and Dixon retained the quality of the humour and the quality of the drawings.

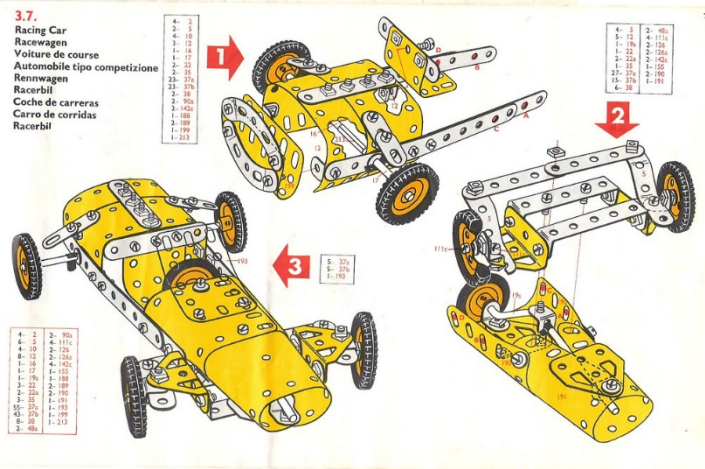
After the war, Bluey and Curley went back to civvie street. They had a variety of jobs. Sometimes they were mere observers of the action. Below are some representative strips done by Gurney:

The dialogue in the comics is authentic Australian English with common Australian slang terms of the 1940s-1970s spread through it. Reading them now they seem incredibly old fashioned. A window into the past. The humour stands up pretty well though.





## The man who made Meccano



Picture Credit: "Meccano" by thenoodleator is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Meccano is a model construction system created around 1900 by Frank Hornby, who was a clerk in Liverpool. He also invented Hornby Trains and Dinky Toys. In 1902, Hornby started calling his model construction toys *Mechanics Made Easy* and he sold them in sets with parts supplied by external businesses in Liverpool. A few years later, he established his first factory and changed the name of the toys to *Meccano*, which he thought would be better, and established his first factory.

In September 1907, Hornby registered the *Meccano* trademark, and the next year he formed Meccano Ltd. To keep pace with demand, a new Meccano factory was built in Binns Road, Liverpool in 1914, which became their headquarters for the next 60 years. Hornby also established factories in France, Spain and Argentina. An office was opened in Berlin where Märklin began to manufacture *Meccano* under licence.

The first sets under the new Meccano name were numbered 1 to 6. In 1922 the No. 7 Meccano Outfit was introduced, which was the largest set of its day, and the most sought after because of its model building capabilities and prestige.

In 1926, to mark the 25th anniversary of his patent, Hornby introduced "Meccano in Colours" with the familiar red and green-coloured Meccano pieces.

### What was it?

The *Meccano* model construction kit consisted of re-usable perforated metal strips, plates and girders, with wheels, pulleys, gears, shaft collars and axles for mechanisms and motion, and nuts and bolts and set screws to connect the pieces together. It was more than just a toy: it was educational, teaching basic mechanical principles like levers and gearing. It provided curious kids all over England with construction sets that enabled them to explore the principles of mechanical engineering, using metal nuts and bolts, young thinkers could build with limitless possibilities. The only tools required were a screwdriver and spanners.

### Takeovers

By the early 1960s Meccano Ltd began experiencing financial problems, in spite of exports worth over £1m, and was bought out by Lines Bros Ltd (Tri-ang), Meccano's biggest competitor, in February 1964. This purchase included both the British and French Meccano factories. Sweeping changes were implemented, including the removal from office of the last members of the Hornby family and applying the Hornby name to the Tri-ang plastic trains. In 1970 Lines Brothers changed the company name to Meccano-Tri-ang.

In 1971, the Lines Brothers Tri-ang group went into voluntary liquidation and Meccano-Tri-ang was eventually sold to Airfix industries in 1972, the company name reverting to Meccano Ltd. At the same time, General Mills, a United States toy manufacturer, purchased the majority of shares of Meccano France S.A., renaming the French company Miro-Meccano.

### The new Meccano

With competition from other manufacturers from around the world and the increasing popularity of television, Meccano Ltd's dominance of the toy market diminished sharply. To cut their losses, Airfix closed Meccano Ltd's flagship Binns Road factory in Liverpool in November 1979, bringing to an end three-quarters of a century of British toy making. The manufacture of Meccano, however, still continued in France. Airfix was eventually liquidated two years later and in 1981 General Mills purchased Meccano Ltd UK, giving it complete control of the Meccano franchise. It shifted all Meccano and Airfix operations to France and completely revamped the Miro-Meccano construction sets.

In August 1985 French accountant Marc Rebibo bought Miro-Meccano from General Mills, reverted the French company name to Meccano S.A. and reintroduced some of the discontinued Meccano sets. In 1989 Rebibo was bought out by Finamec (Financière de Serbie), who continued the manufacture of Meccano in France. In 1990 Meccano France purchased the "Erector" trademark in the U.S.A. and started selling Meccano sets marked "Erector Meccano" in the U.S.A.

By 2000, Meccano France was faltering and was bought out in May 2000 by the Japanese toy company Nikko, who continue to manufacture Meccano sets in France and China, although very different from the Meccano originally manufactured by the Binns Road factory. In 2013, the Meccano brand was acquired by the Canadian toy company Spin Master. In 1913, a very similar construction set had been introduced in the United States under the brand name Erector. In 2000, the new owners of Meccano bought the Erector brand and unified its presence worldwide.

### Publications

Hornby wrote a number of pieces of literature marketing his creation and continuing to spark interest, including the *Meccano Magazine* and two full-length books. The book *Frank Hornby, the Boy Who Made \$1,000,000 With a Toy* was written and published by Hornby in 1915. Hornby started the *Meccano Magazine* in 1916, publishing the first issue in black and white. The magazine told the story of Meccano's beginnings, written by Frank Hornby himself. In 1919 the Meccano Guild was founded to serve as an umbrella organisation for all the local Meccano clubs, with the *Meccano Magazine* serving as the club magazine.

### Brighton Toy and Model Museum

Brighton Toy and Model Museum is an independent toy museum. Its collection focuses on toys and models produced in the UK and Europe up until the mid-20th Century and occupies four thousand square feet of floor space within four of the early Victorian arches supporting the forecourt of Brighton railway station. Founded in 1991, the museum holds over ten thousand toys and models, including model train collections, puppets, Corgi, Dinky, Budgie Toys, construction toys and radio-controlled aircraft.

### Contributed by



Martin Pollins

The display area includes large operational model railway layouts (in 0- and 00-gauge) and displays of period pieces from manufacturers and brands including Bing, Bassett-Lowke, Georges Crette, Dinky, Hornby Trains, Märklin, Meccano, Pelham Puppets and Steiff. It also includes individually engineered working models including a quarter-scale traction engine, a steamroller and a Spitfire fighter plane in the lobby.

## When Wilfred met the Beatles



Once upon a time, a very long time ago, on a train, Wifred Bramble met the Beatles.

Not a lot of people know that Wifred was an Irish television and film actor long before he became famous a for his role in the television series Steptoe and Son.

The Beatles were actors too - in their debut film *A Hard Day's Night*, Wilfred played the fictional grandfather of Paul McCartney.

You can Watch what happened at:  
<https://youtu.be/xTHYjxz8wq4>

## Sellers' Humour



Click [here](#) to see Clouseau at work, (clip from the video is above).

## The Reunion

A group of old friends discussed where they should meet for lunch for their reunion.

They were all aged about 40.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at the Ocean View restaurant, because the waitresses there were very pretty.

Ten years later, at age 50, the friends once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the food was good and the wine selection was excellent.

Ten years later, at age 60, the friends again discussed where they should meet for lunch.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they could dine in peace and quiet and the restaurant had a beautiful view of the ocean.

Ten years later, at age 70, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and had a lift.

Ten years later, at age 80, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at the Ocean View restaurant - because they'd never been there before.



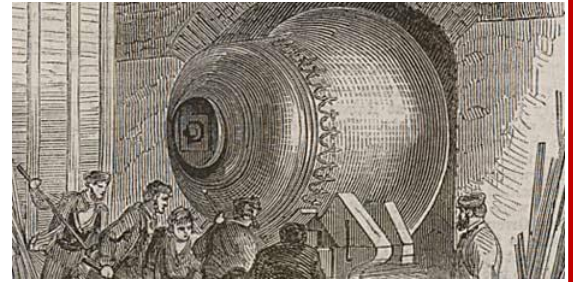
Picture Credit: "Old men" by Zavosh is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

**Edit: The real joke is the suggestion that the restaurant lasted for 40 years!**



### Ding Dong!

In August 2017, the Clock Tower on the North side of the Palace of Westminster in London, was shut down for major repairs, restoration, improvements, and modernisation, including a new striker for The Great Bell. The deep, full sound of The Great Bell is expected, and demanded by the entire world. After giving The Great Bell a few tries, with the new striker, the only sound the famous bell made was a dull thud. That was totally unacceptable. British engineers and physicists the world over, worked frantically to solve the problem. Many months went by, with no solution, or even a guess on how to solve it.



Picture Credit: © Crown Copyright, Big Ben. Parliament UK

Then fate took a hand... As horrible as it was, in April 2018, Notre Dame burned down, but the tragedy proved to be a Godsend for the Great Bell. It freed up the best, and most famous bell ringer of all time: *Quasi Modo*, the hunch backed, grotesque faced, bell ringer of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Queen Elizabeth II immediately dispatched the chairman, and five members of the Clock Tower commission to Paris, to offer *Quasi Modo* a new job. Quasi, after seeing the tear eyed commission, accepted the invitation, and went to London. Immediately, the Hunchback identified the problem, and had the new striker removed, and some minor adjustments to how the bell was hung.

To the absolute astonishment of the Tower commission, engineers, and scientists, Quasi stretched his arms out along the edge of the Great Bell, leaned back, and smashed his face into the bell. It roared to life, with that deep, satisfying ring, even better, more melodious than ever before. Londoners all over the city, had to stop and gasp at the beauty of the sound. The Queen, in her chambers, heard it as well. She pressed her hand against her chest, tilted her head back, and breathed deeply and contentedly through her nostrils. She shut her eyes with a smile because she just knew it could only be the talent of *Quasi Modo*.

The Bell Commission had a small balcony installed on the bell chamber, so that Quasi could dart out to wave at all the people gathering on the streets below, just to see him. Tourism in London increased one-thousand-fold. The Queen, as an attraction, actually rejoiced at being somewhat second staged. BUT...Quasi, getting older, and after a few months of bell ringing, lamented the fact that he never got any time off, or even, perhaps, short holidays to see his new homeland. He went to the Chairman of the Bell commission to present his case.

It was hopeless. The Chairman said that unless Quasi could find a substitute, who could ring the Great Bell as well as he could, and looked as grotesque, with a club foot, and a hunched back, London could no longer afford the loss to the number one tourist attraction. It would be a financial disaster. That night, totally despondent, Quasi took a walk along the Thames, even more hunch backed than usual. The walk reminded him of his night walks along the Seine in Paris, where the lights would flicker, as he passed by the menagerie of drunks, ladies of the night, and the downtrodden.

In the flickering half dark, Quasi bumped, abruptly, into someone. Both apologized profusely, but in the dim light, Quasi was astonished to see a man who could be his identical twin brother, not as well dressed, of course, but ugly, hunchbacked, and club footed, perhaps a little younger. "Say..." Quasi blurted out, exuberantly, with wide grinning eyes. "How has your luck been? Would you like steady meals? How about a warm, soft bed to sleep in every night? I have just the job for you, and it is easy." All the other hunchback could do was to grin widely, and nod with excitement.

"But first we will need the approval of the Chairman of the Commission," Quasi said.

The two went straight to the Chairman's House, and in spite of the late hour, they pounded on his door. A very irate gentleman, in his night clothes, muttering profanities, opened the door. He straightened bolt upright at what he saw. It was Quasi Modo, and another man, who could be his identical twin. "Well," said the Chairman. "This fellow looks enough like you, Quasi, to fool any tourist, but you'll have to take him up to the belfry in the morning to see if he can ring the Great Bell, only as you can."

The two new companions went up into the belfry, and talked to each other of their lives, until the sun started to rise in the morning. Quasi went to the bell, stretched his arm out along the rim of the bell, leaned back, and smashed his face into the Great Bell. It rang magnificently, and every Londoner smiled. It was the most fitting, most joyful music, to start their day. "Give it a try," Quasi said to his companion. The other Hunchback gripped the Bell as he had been shown, leaned back, and also with a smile, smashed his face into the bell. It uttered nothing more than a dull thud. Quasi was nearly frantic and ordered the other hunchback to step back a pace or two. Then take a run at it, face first, to increase the strength of the contact. The other hunchback, intently complied, but with only another dull thud as a result.

"Back up," Quasi said. "Back up, back up, way back," and the other hunchback complied.

But...he backed up too far, and into the small balcony, where the railing hit him well below the waist. He flipped head over heels, over the railing, and down multiple storeys, to die on the pavement below. A crowd of Londoners, and tourists, hoping to see Quasi, gathered quickly around fractured body of the poor hapless man. Among the crowd was the Chairman of the Bell Committee.

"Sir, Sir," the crowd demanded. "Who is this poor soul?" The Chairman bent down to study the hunchback's face. "I don't know," he said. "But he is a dead ringer for *Quasi Modo*."

Quasi, who had rushed down the tower, arrived seconds later. "Quasi Modo, Quasi Modo," the crowd demanded. "Who is this poor soul?"

Quasi also bent down to look the poor fellow over. "I don't know," he said sadly. "His face just doesn't ring a bell!"

## Cooking in World War 2

Ministry of Food Information 1939-1945

### Reminders of Cooking 1939-1945

### PUDDINGS

**BLACKBERRY PUDDING**

Take 100g of blackberries, wash and dry. Peel and core 2 apples. Grate the apples and mix with the blackberries. Add 100g of sugar and 100g of flour. Mix well. Grease a pudding basin and line with butter. Fill with the mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour.

**BLACKBERRY OR BLACKBERRY RUBY PATTY**

Take 100g of blackberries, wash and dry. Peel and core 2 apples. Grate the apples and mix with the blackberries. Add 100g of sugar and 100g of flour. Mix well. Grease a patty tin and line with butter. Fill with the mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour.

**BLACKBERRY OR BLACKBERRY RUM**

Take 100g of blackberries, wash and dry. Peel and core 2 apples. Grate the apples and mix with the blackberries. Add 100g of sugar and 100g of flour. Mix well. Grease a pudding basin and line with butter. Fill with the mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour.

**BLACKBERRY OR BLACKBERRY TART**

Take 100g of blackberries, wash and dry. Peel and core 2 apples. Grate the apples and mix with the blackberries. Add 100g of sugar and 100g of flour. Mix well. Grease a tart tin and line with butter. Fill with the mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour.

### HEDGEROW HARVEST



There is a wealth of wild fruits in our hedgerows and fields. These are often called 'hedges' and are a valuable source of food. They are often called 'hedges' and are a valuable source of food. They are often called 'hedges' and are a valuable source of food.



MINISTRY OF FOOD  
LEAFLET  
No. 10

MINISTRY OF FOOD  
FOOD ADVICE CENTRE  
154, HIGH STREET,  
SLOUGH.  
Telephone 21530

## Pickles and Chutney

### POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1. SPICES.** These should be boiled to suit individual tastes - some people like hot pickles and chutneys, others like them very mild.
- 2. CHOICE OF PANS.** Do not use iron, brass or copper pans. If enamel-lined pans are used be sure the enamel is not chipped.
- 3. BOTTLING AND COVERING.** Any type of jar may be used, but should first be washed thoroughly in hot water. If metal tins are used they should be protected from the vinegar by a layer of melted wax or fat or by several thicknesses of grease-proof paper. Well-fitting covers covered with grease-proof paper are satisfactory. If paper covers only are used there will be a certain amount of evaporation but this is prevented if a piece of rag previously dipped in melted wax or fat is laid over the paper.
- 4. STORING.** Label and store in a dry place. Most chutneys and pickles improve with keeping.

Page 1

## FOOD CHART

**GROUP 1**

**BUILDING**

**BODY BUILDING FOODS**

build the body and prevent the tissues wearing out

- MILK
- CHEESE
- EGGS
- MEAT
- FISH

**GROUP 2**

**ENERGY**

**ENERGY FOODS**

provide fuel for the body

- POTATOES
- BREAD
- FLOUR
- OATMEAL
- RICE
- SAGO
- SUGAR
- DRIED FRUIT
- HONEY
- CHEESE
- BUTTER
- MARGARINE
- DRIPPING
- SUET
- LARD
- BACON
- HAM

**GROUP 3**

**PROTECTIVE**

**PROTECTIVE FOODS**

give protection from illness

- MILK
- BUTTER
- MARGARINE
- CHEESE
- EGGS
- HERRINGS
- SALMON
- LIVER

**GROUP 4**

**PROTECTIVE**


**PROTECTIVE FOODS**

give protection from illness

- POTATOES
- CARROTS
- FRUIT
- GREEN VEGETABLES
- SALADS
- TOMATOES
- WHOLEMEAL BREAD
- BROWN BREAD

**EAT SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP EVERY DAY**

## POTATOES



**T**HERE is no vegetable more useful than the homely potato. It is a valuable yet cheap source of energy, and one of the foods that help to protect us from ill-health. It contains the same vitamin as oranges and 1 lb. of potatoes daily will give half the amount of this vitamin needed to prevent fatigue and help fight infection.

So don't think of potatoes merely as something to serve with the meat. They can be much more than that. A stuffed baked potato can be a course in itself. Potatoes can be used, too, in soups, salads, pastry, savoury supper dishes and even biscuits, as the following recipes show.

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No. 37

## Christmas Fare

Here are recipes for popular Christmas meals. You'll find that, though they're not extravagant with ingredients, they give you the traditional Christmas flavour.

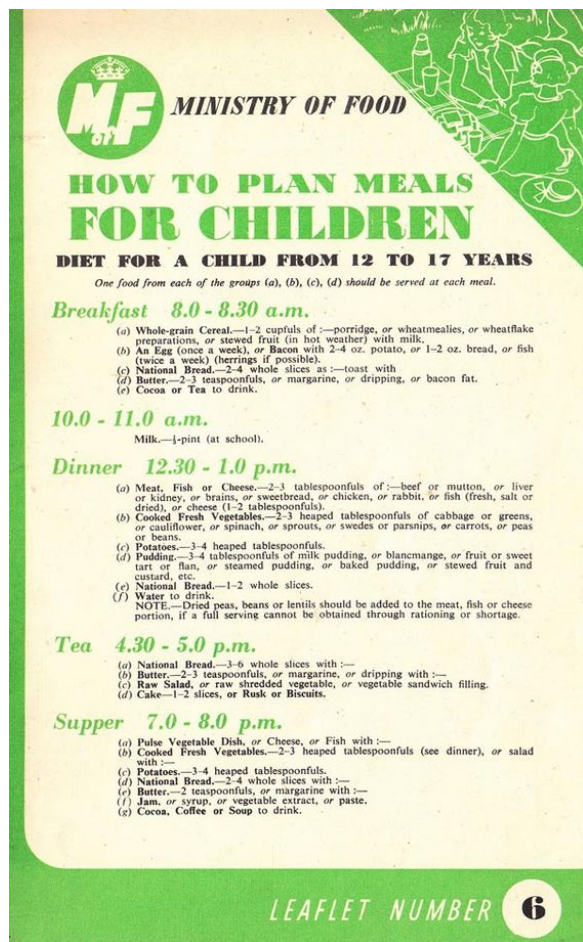
### CHRISTMAS CAKE

1 lb. sugar, 4 oz. margarine, 1 lb. butter, 10 eggs, 1 lb. plain flour, 1 lb. ground almonds, 1 lb. raisins, 1 lb. currants, 1 lb. mixed fruit, 1 lb. orange marmalade, 1 lb. lemon marmalade, 1 lb. pineapple marmalade, 1 lb. apricot marmalade, 1 lb. cherry marmalade, 1 lb. strawberry marmalade, 1 lb. raspberry marmalade, 1 lb. blackberry marmalade, 1 lb. elderberry marmalade, 1 lb. hawthorn marmalade, 1 lb. rosehip marmalade, 1 lb. sea buckthorn marmalade, 1 lb. dog rose marmalade, 1 lb. rosehip marmalade, 1 lb. sea buckthorn marmalade, 1 lb. dog rose marmalade.

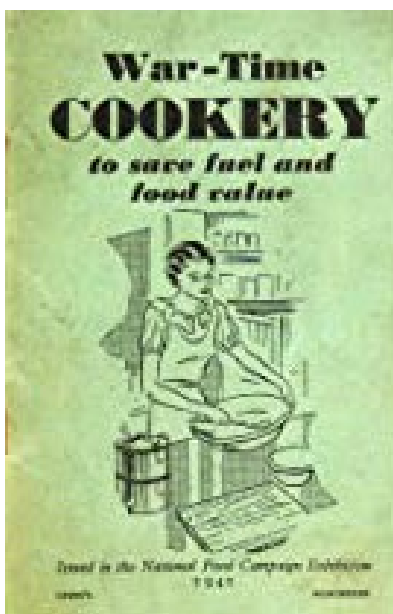
1. Cream the sugar and margarine together and beat in the eggs one by one. 2. Add the flour and mix well. 3. Add the marmalades and mix well. 4. Add the fruit and mix well. 5. Bake in a moderate oven for 3 hours.

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD





### Buy a Book and Cook as your Parents did in the War



Replica reproduction War-Time cookery Recipe Booklet:  
World War 2  
(Available at Amazon)

## Popular Wartime Pie

Well, it's all well and good looking at some of the publicity material put out by the Ministry of Food, but what about a real meal? Or to be more specific, a pie eaten in wartime Britain.

The very popular Woolton Pie (formerly Lord Woolton Pie) was produced in British kitchens and helped fight the enemy between 1939 and 1945. Its ingredients were items available despite food rationing at the time. It's a pastry dish of vegetables and was created at the Savoy Hotel in London by its then Maitre Chef de Cuisine, Francis Latry. It was named after the Minister for Food (April 1940 to 11 November 1943), Lord Woolton.

### Contents of the Pie

1 lb cauliflower (note: no metric weights!)  
1 lb parsnips  
1 lb carrots  
1 lb potatoes  
Bunch of spring onions chopped  
2 teaspoons of Marmite (yeast extract – or you can use a stock cube)  
1 tablespoon of oats  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Parsley (fresh or dried)

### Ingredients for the Pastry

8oz wholemeal/wholewheat flour  
4oz mashed potato  
3oz margarine or lard  
2 tsp of baking powder  
A couple of large pinches of salt  
Dash of water if the mix is too dry.

### How to Make It

Chop the vegetables into chunks with those that take longest to cook into smaller pieces.  
Place in pot and bring to simmer with just enough water to reach 3/4 of the way up the veg in the pot.  
Add the Marmite and rolled oats, salt and pepper and cook until tender and most of the water has been absorbed.  
Place mixture in deep pie dish and sprinkle with fresh parsley (or add dry parsley to mixture and mix in well).  
Make the pastry by mixing the flour with the baking powder and salt and then rubbing in the margarine.  
Mix the mashed potato in to form a dough and knead (add a little water to the mixture if too dry).  
Roll out to form pie crust and place on top and decorate then brush with milk.  
Place in oven at 200C for 30 minutes or so until top is firm and browned.

Eat and enjoy... the finished result should look like this:



Picture Credit:  
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## The Whole Equation: A History of Hollywood

Extracted from a book of that title by David Thomson © Copyright 2004, published by First Fintage Books



Picture Credit: "Charlie Chaplin" by twm1340 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Charlie Chaplin, who became Hollywood's biggest star, came from a life of destitution: "[Charlie Chaplin's] father? There was a Charles Chaplin, Sr., a music hall singer, who was briefly with the mother, Hannah Hill, though never married to her. Charles was likely the father of [Charlie's reputed half-brother] Sydney, though the family story was that Sydney was a bastard. Charlie saw Charles Chaplin a few times - as a drunk in pubs, mostly - and the 'father' died when the boy was twelve. As for the mother, she did not die until 1928, in California, a hospitalized schizophrenic supported by, but rarely visited by, her son. Her 'cultivation' was in Charlie's eyes or memory alone.

"In his autobiography, Chaplin remembers having her up to his new house on Summit Drive one day. She gazed at the extravagant property and supposed he must be rich. He told her he was worth \$5 million. 'So long as you're able to keep your health and enjoy it,' she replied.

"She died without ever settling for him who his father was. The question remains open because it's likely that she had taken to prostitution to make ends meet. So it could have been anyone - to explain the Italianate looks, or even the Semitic cast (Charlie often said that he wondered whether he was Jewish), the educated voice, and the fastidious air of good manners. I doubt he wanted it settled. Without plain facts, he was so much more mobile and lofty a soul, like any of those foundlings in Dickens. It's a wonder in these days that someone hasn't pinned him down as the love child of some royal figure, or Jack the Ripper.

"I do not mean to exclude the chance that Chaplin

was simply the son of an unstable music hall singer on the game, and some south London rake. After all, Louis Armstrong, born in New Orleans only a few years after Chaplin, and as tumultuous a genius, was plainly the child of a poor, teenage prostitute. What is more intriguing, with Charlie, is the invented persona that seems to reach from tramp to king. Something in his self-regard accommodated the urchin and a nearly divine grace. I suspect he wondered whether he came from God.

"Charlie did get a little schooling, but he went from cheap terraced housing to the Lambeth Workhouse. Still, his mother's connections got him as a youth into the Fred Karno music hall touring company, a first-class operation. That's how he reached America, met Mack Sennett, and was hired on at Keystone, initially at \$150 a week (a grand sum of money then). He told Sydney to hurry over: 'We will be millionaires before long.' In 1916, Chaplin moved to Essanay, at \$1,250 a week, and was required to make one one-reel picture every three weeks (a time span that already attested to the care of genius).

"The business then was a mass of small companies, and people jumped around (and up). But actors were seldom masters of their fate. (So many other comedian careers are woeful next to Charlie's.) It's as if Charlie moved to his plan: when he moved, he transformed his status. Less than a year later, he was at Mutual at \$10,000 a week, with a signing bonus of \$150,000 and guarantees of a freshly equipped studio for his personal use. (Ten thousand dollars a week in those days is, by today's standards, at least \$10 million a year, but this does not adequately convey Chaplin's self-promotion or his wealth. And the top rate of income tax was 7 percent, so Charlie in a week was taxed what a factory laborer might earn in a year.)"

### Comment from Martin Pollins

Delanceyplace is a FREE brief daily email with an excerpt or quote they view as interesting or noteworthy, offered with commentary to provide context. There is no theme, except that most excerpts will come from a non-fiction work, mainly works of history, and they hope will have a more universal relevance than simply the subject of the book from which they came. And there is not necessarily an endorsement, and in some cases an excerpt may be particularly controversial, and Delanceyplace may disagree with some or all of it, but nevertheless deem it worth noting.

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Picture Credit: <https://static.pexels.com/photos/7517/animal-sitting-animals-inside.jpg>

## More about Pangur Bán, 'White Pangur'

In last month's Nil Desperandum, there was reference to "**Pangur Bán**", an Old Irish poem, written about the 9th century at or around **Reichenau Abbey**, in Southern Germany, the poem illustrates the monk's perceived similarities between himself and his feline pet. It was written by an Irish monk, and is about his cat. Pangur Bán, 'White Pangur', is the cat's name, *Pangur* meaning 'a fuller'. Although the poem is anonymous, it bears similarities to the poetry of **Sedulius Scottus**, prompting speculation that Sedulius is the author.

In eight verses of four lines each, the author compares the cat's happy hunting with his own scholarly pursuits.

The poem is preserved in the **Reichenau Primer** (Stift St. Paul Cod. 86b/I fol 1v) and now kept in **St. Paul's Abbey in the Lavanttal**.

Here's the poem:

### 'The scholar and His Cat, Pangur Bán'

(Translated from the Irish by **Robin Flower**)

*I and Pangur Bán my cat,  
'Tis a like task we are at:  
Hunting mice is his delight,  
Hunting words I sit all night.*

*Better far than praise of men  
'Tis to sit with book and pen;  
Pangur bears me no ill-will,  
He too plies his simple skill.*

*'Tis a merry task to see  
At our tasks how glad are we,  
When at home we sit and find  
Entertainment to our mind.*

*Oftentimes a mouse will stray  
In the hero Pangur's way;  
Oftentimes my keen thought set  
Takes a meaning in its net.*

*'Gainst the wall he sets his eye  
Full and fierce and sharp and sly;  
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I  
All my little wisdom try.*

*When a mouse darts from its den,  
O how glad is Pangur then!  
O what gladness do I prove  
When I solve the doubts I love!*

*So in peace our task we ply,  
Pangur Bán, my cat, and I;  
In our arts we find our bliss,  
I have mine and he has his.*

*Practice every day has made  
Pangur perfect in his trade;  
I get wisdom day and night  
Turning darkness into light.*

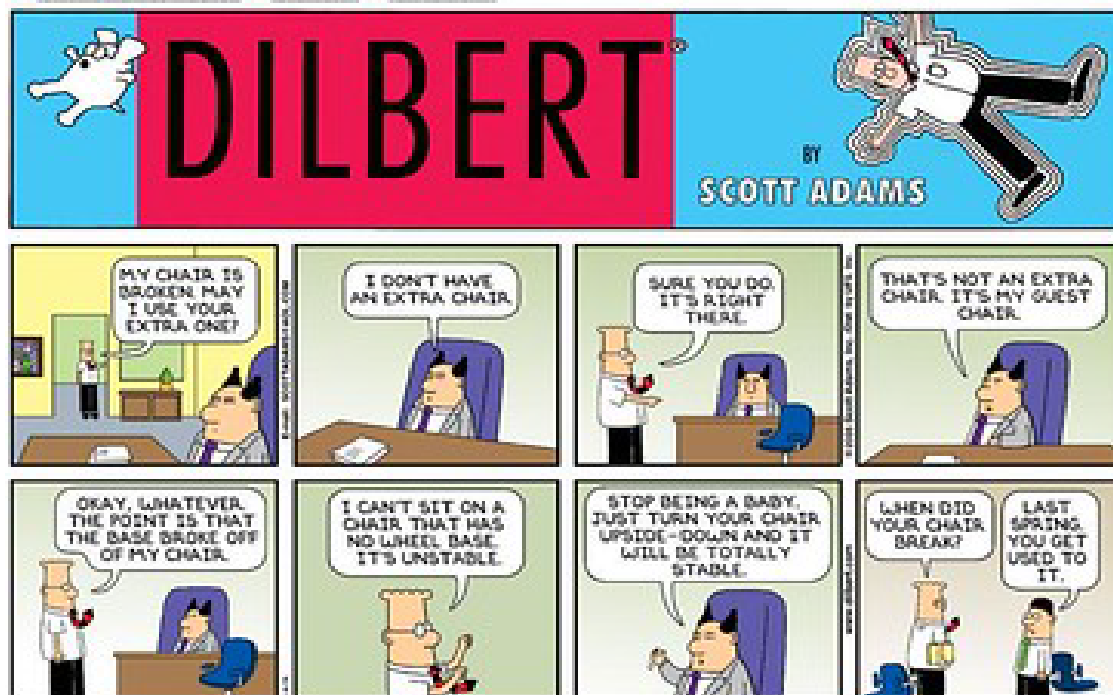
An English translation by **W. H. Auden** is:

*Pangur, white Pangur, How happy we are  
Alone together, scholar and cat  
Each has his own work to do daily;  
For you it is hunting, for me study.  
Your shining eye watches the wall;  
My feeble eye is fixed on a book.  
You rejoice, when your claws entrap a mouse;  
I rejoice when my mind fathoms a problem.  
Pleased with his own art, neither hinders the other;  
Thus we live ever without tedium and envy.*

There's a reading available online by Seamus Heaney: A Memorial Celebration, "Pangur Bán", which you can view [here](#).



## Finish with a Smile



Picture Credit: "chair up yo ass!" by ~C4Chaos is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

## QUIZ Answers for October 2020

1. Sulphuric Acid
2. BOAC and BEA
3. Ely
4. Volume
5. Bach
6. Vauxhall Bridge
7. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
8. Jules Verne
9. 1666
10. Twenty-two miles
11. Pugnacious
12. Poultry
13. Gloucestershire
14. This word relates to the study of signs and symbols and their use in interpretation analysis. Its importance lies in conveying a meaning as distinct from words. Besides the use of the English language this method provides an additional method of understanding.
15. Henry the Fifth
16. Thirteen
17. This problem is termed Tinnitus. It is not a disease but a symptom that something is wrong in the auditory system, which includes the ear, the auditory nerve that connects the inner ear to the brain, and the parts of the brain that process sound. With Tinnitus, the source of the problem will be the loss of tiny sensory hair cells in the cochlea (a bone of the inner ear). This will occur as we age and endure increasing exposure to excessive loud noises. Medications taken by the elderly also contribute to the problem of both hearing loss and Tinnitus.
18. 1453
19. John Cleese
20. The professional body for solicitors (not barristers)

## Answer to the brain teaser about two mathematicians

If Alice gets heads, she will guess that Bob also got heads, and if she gets tails she will guess that Bob also got tails. Meanwhile, if Bob gets heads he will guess that Alice got tails, and if he gets tails he will guess that Alice got heads. Then exactly one of them will always be right.

