

# Nil *Desperandum*

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club

**ISSUE 13**

*April 2021*

*Isolated but not alone*



Nil *Desperandum* had its first birthday last month. This issue, number 13, marks the start of year two and is slightly longer than previous editions. Let's celebrate with something that we received via Facebook: from 12<sup>th</sup> April, we may be able to eat outside. Could it be fun? Click [here](#) and see how much fun!

We hope you enjoy the eclectic nature of the magazine and laugh or chuckle at the funny stories interspersed on its various pages. We want more contributions from our readers – that includes you – so, please put your thinking cap on and recall something serious, but interesting or something funny or a life- or work- experience you would like to share with others.

The idea for Nil *Desperandum* originally came from Brian Bridges (we miss you Brian) as a way to keep in touch with each other at our Probus Club. We hope we are still doing that. Take a look at the index on the next page and you'll see what this edition has in store for you.

Good wishes to you all.

**Martin Pollins**



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Screenshot from video at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLu8luVmW3I>

This clip is from the comedy film *Carry on Cleo* and shows British humour at its best – low brow, silly (at times) and very dry. The film was released in 1964 and was the 10<sup>th</sup> in the series of 31 *Carry On* films, which ran from 1958 to 1992. It featured regulars Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Kenneth Connor, Charles Hawtrey, and Jim Dale. Click on the link above, then sit back and enjoy the *Carry On* team at their best.

## The man who liked bananas...



This story is about a man called Josef who worked for the railways in Poland as a conductor. One day, Josef was walking through the train, en route, checking tickets from the passengers. He arrived at carriage 12 which had a corridor and 5 separate compartments. In compartment 3 was a man, smoking a very big pipe. Josef asked the man for his ticket: "Excuse me sir, do have your ticket?" "Oh, I am soooo sorry, I dropped it out the window by accident," the man replied.

"Sorry sir, we can't have any passengers without tickets." Josef grabbed the man by the scruff of the neck and threw him out of the train. Unfortunately, the man landed on the tracks and was run over by a train going the other way. Naturally, Josef was arrested and thrown in jail. He was convicted of murder before a jury and sentenced to death by electrocution.

The day of his execution arrived, and Josef was asked what he would like for his last meal. He asked for a banana. They gave it to him, he ate it, received his last rites, and was escorted to the electric chair. The executioner strapped Josef in and hooked everything up. Then, the executioner threw the big switch once, but nothing happened. So, he did it again, and still nothing happened. Well, by law in Poland at the time, Josef although clearly alive, was deemed legally dead, so they had to release him.

Oddly enough, Josef got a job on another railroad, as a conductor! One day, he was gathering tickets, and came to a booth with a little boy. "Young man, do you have your ticket?", asked the conductor. "A-a-a, I'm sorry, I ate it by mistake...", said the little boy.

And... the same thing happened - the boy was thrown off the train and was sadly killed. Josef was arrested, sentenced to death by electrocution. On his last day, the death row guard asked him what he would like for his last meal. He asked for banana again. He ate it, and a priest gave him last rites.

He was escorted to the death chamber. This time, though, the executioners were smart. They washed his hands to get rid of any banana slime, they washed the chair. Next, they placed Josef in the chair, and hooked him up. The switch-puller pulled the switch once, and nothing happened. The switch-puller pulled the switch again, and nothing happened, not even a single hair raising on Josef's chest.

Well, as the law says, they had to let him go... Even more amazingly, he got a job on yet another railroad. This time it was a Rabbi. Same old stuff. The Rabbi had no ticket (he forgot to buy it). Josef threw him off the train, and the Rabbi was killed. Josef was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death by electrocution.

When the guard asked Josef what he would like for a last meal, he asked for a banana. He ate it, received last rites, and was escorted to the electrocution chamber.

However, this time the officials were going to get it right! They scrubbed his body with a Brillo pad. They scrubbed the chair with steel wool. They tried the chair on a few other prisoners... Then they strapped Josef in the chair and threw the switch once - nothing happened. They threw the switch a second time, nothing happened. At this point the guy was legally dead, etc, etc.

But, before the guy could leave, the executioner, extremely frustrated (he'd seen Josef three times already), asked, "What is it with the bananas!" Josef replied, "I just like bananas."

So, the executioner screamed, "THEN HOW COME YOU DON'T DIE!!!!!"

"I dunno," replied Josef, "I guess I'm a very bad conductor."

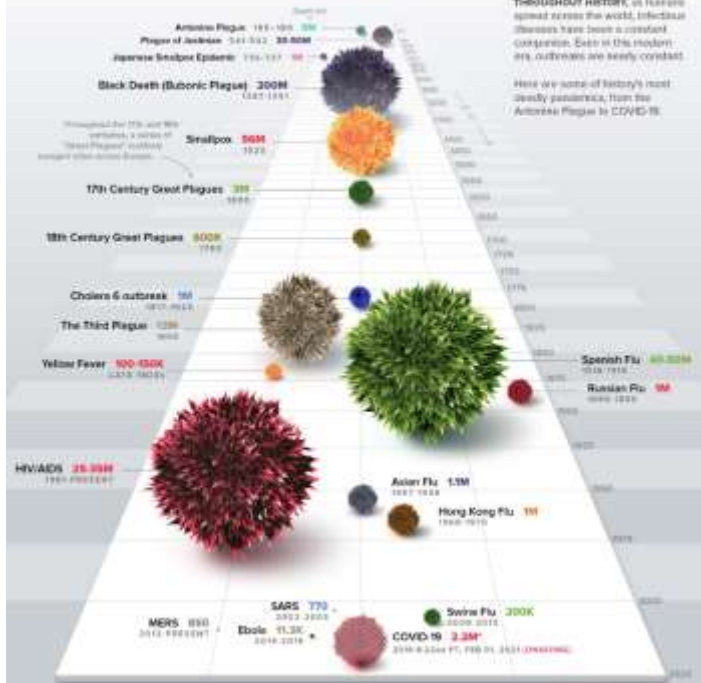


## HISTORY OF PANDEMICS

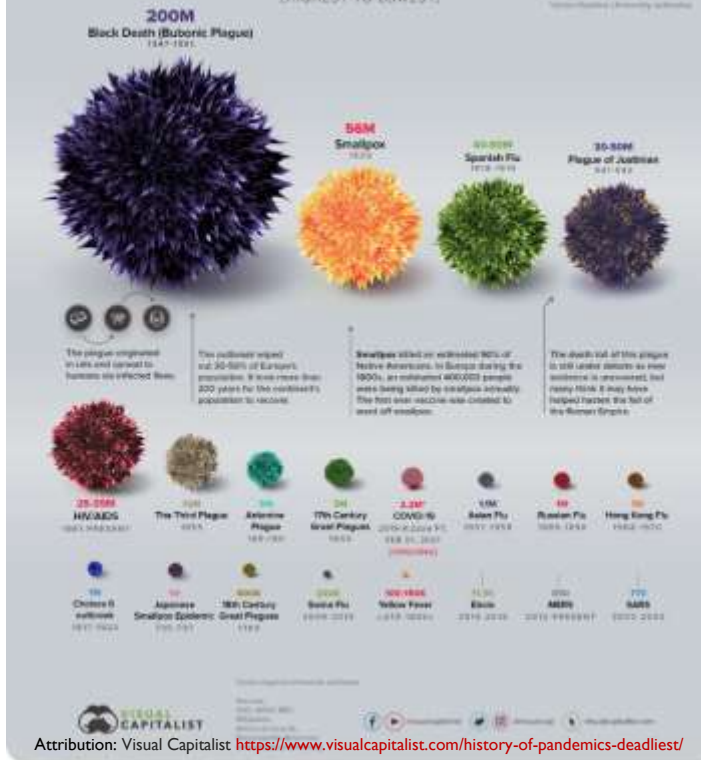
THE-2020 IS NOT A DISCREET PRECEDENT FOR A WHOLE COUNTRY OF THE WORLD.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, as humans spread across the world, infectious diseases have been a constant companion. Even in the modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant.

Here are some of history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to COVID-19.



### DEATH TOLL (HIGHEST TO LOWEST)



## Everything you (probably never) wanted to know about Pandemics...

Excerpted from: Article by Andrei Tapalaga at: <https://medium.com/history-of-yesterday/how-did-previous-pandemics-come-to-an-end-70b851e6d0b9> on the History of Yesterday website

- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>
- <https://arstechnica.com/science/2020/07/ancient-trash-heaps-reveal-the-plague-of-justinians-economic-toll/>
- <https://www.ancient.eu/article/939/the-plague-at-athens-430-427-bce/>
- <https://medstudentstories.merckmanuals.com/learning-from-history-part-2-the-plague-of-justinian/>
- <https://www.mphonline.org/worst-pandemics-in-history/>
- <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/history-of-pandemics-deadliest/>

As we have evolved as a human species, we have also given way to the spread of various diseases and plagues that have been the major cause of death throughout the history of humanity. Different beliefs from traditions, religions, and cultures have made us think that such events have been brought down by the Gods with unsubstantiated and illogical reasoning such as *teaching humanity a lesson*. All major pandemics have in some way or another eventually come to an end, but how?

Although over many years, scientists and medical researchers have differed over the exact definition of a pandemic (is it a pandemic, or an epidemic), there is one thing that everyone agrees on: the word describes the widespread occurrence of disease, in excess of what might normally be expected in a geographical region. If you want to know more about when huge swathes of the population were struck down by plagues (and epidemics) through history, click [here](#). The major pandemics through history provide an interesting insight on how they were eventually stopped, and the changes made in the behaviour of human beings during such catastrophic times, as can be seen in the following selection (leaving aside the coronavirus disease of 2019 (covid-19) which, at the time of writing, is still with us):

**The Plague at Athens (430-427 BCE):** In the second year of the Peloponnesian War in 430 BCE, an outbreak of plague erupted in Athens. The source is thought to have occurred in sub-Saharan Africa just south of Ethiopia and would persist throughout scattered parts of Greece and the eastern Mediterranean before finally dying out in 426/427 BCE. Many of the sick found it difficult to sleep, instead, displaying a constant restlessness. Many of the sufferers died within 7-9 days from the onset of symptoms. The plague entered Athens through the city's port of Piraeus. According to various scholars, by its end, the epidemic killed upwards of one-third of the population; a population which numbered 250,000-300,000 in the 5th century BCE. By most accounts, the plague which struck Athens was the most lethal episode of illness in the period of Classical Greece history. **Watch a video 'presented' by Thucydides, author of The History of the Peloponnesian War. He catches the plague and describes his symptoms, available online at:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUI\\_HmoLago](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUI_HmoLago)

**Plague of Justinian (541-549AD):** The Plague of Justinian, as it came to be known (named after Emperor Justinian I who held the throne of Byzantium) was found to have been caused by black rats that travelled on the grain ships and carts sent to Constantinople (Source: Wikipedia Commons). This pandemic was caused by a bacteria called *Yersinia pestis*. It was one of the worst pandemics to ever take place in Europe and was the first time that humans were hit by a major pandemic with the death count running to millions – perhaps as many as 50 million – some say that the Plague of Justinian killed 50% of the world's population. The first wave of plague killed 20% of the population of Constantinople. Infection devastated the trade port of Alexandria. Over the next 160 years, wave after wave of plague may have killed up to half the population of the Byzantine Empire. It even reached Britain. In less than a year, the pandemic had spread worldwide. Lack of medical knowledge and technology meant nobody understood how this plague was spreading or stop it. The only precautionary measure taken was to distance themselves from those who were sick. But it still took nine years to get rid of the problem after which people thought that they would never again suffer such an experience again...

Continued >>>



>>> Continued

### Black Death/Bubonic Plague (1347–1351):



Picture Credit: "Bubonic plague strikes" by duncan is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The second and most devastating pandemic that hit humans was the Black Death (aka the Bubonic Plague). Estimates are that over 200 million people died in a period of only four years. The Bubonic Plague was brought to Sicily from a small colony in Crimea. From there onwards, the plague took over Europe and, after a year, the rest of the world. Again, humanity couldn't work out what was going on and didn't know how to protect themselves from this disease. Many still believed that it was another sign from a divine power due to the number of wars provoked by humanity. Then, in 1348, the state of Venice came up with something called **quarantine**. Every sailor that came into the port of Venice during the Black Death pandemic was forced to be quarantined for thirty days to show that they do not manifest any sort of sickness. Just to make sure, this period was lengthened to forty days.

**The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Great Plagues:** Even if these plagues were considered a smaller pandemic due to a low death count of only 100,000 it is still worth mentioning as something new was put to work. Those in charge at the time predicted that if it were not possible to stop the plague from entering the country, maybe if they detected those who had the plague, and sent them into a secluded place, the rest of the population could be saved. This plague (just like others) was easily transmitted from animals to humans – this led the authorities in London to kill all the dogs and cats within the city or other animals within the region. Also, all events were shut down so that most people were forced to stay at home thus creating a low potential to spread the plague. This led to **isolation**. All sick people were moved to the countryside either to die or until they overcame the sickness. Wherever there were infected people, a red cross was drawn on their house warning others to keep away and to ensure that no one was allowed to enter, nor allowed to come out of the building. At night, the dead bodies were picked up to keep the plague away from those who were still alive. These measures worked – which is why these pandemics only lasted for eighteen months.

**Cholera (1817–1923):** This pandemic ravaged the world once again. This bacteria affected the intestines and usually, the transmission of this bacteria came from contaminated water or produce contaminated with faecal matter. This was probably the first time that mankind found out the source of a pandemic. In 1854, British medic John Snow, one of the founders of modern epidemiology, managed to identify the source of Cholera which was mainly contaminated wells around the world with dead animals, bacteria, or simply faeces. This is when people started to find ways to purify their source of water, or at least boil the water before use. The discovery that John Snow made was due to the increased political publicity in the medical sector. People started to acknowledge that pandemics are becoming a trend, which means that humanity will always be challenged by them. Unfortunately, this bacteria still exists in third world countries. **Watch a video about John Snow and the 1854 Broad Street cholera outbreak at:** <https://youtu.be/INjrAXGRda4>

**Smallpox (18<sup>th</sup> century — 19<sup>th</sup> century):** This was more of an ongoing disease rather than a pandemic, but it did, just like many others start as a pandemic. It is assumed that Smallpox came from India in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and spread quickly throughout the whole world as a lot of goods were being exported from India at the time. It is estimated that Smallpox had taken over 250 million lives, most of them in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The severity of this virus was within how contagious it was, as well as scary looking due to its effects such as small pimples all around the body. Edward Jenner (the 'father of immunology'), a British-French physician and scientist who pioneered the concept of vaccines, created the smallpox vaccine, the world's first vaccine. The terms vaccine and vaccination are derived from *Variolae vaccinae*, the term devised by Jenner to denote cowpox. Vaccination is considered as the most significant breakthrough in combating pandemics. **Watch a BBC TWO video as Edward Jenner tells the story of his life and how he discovered how to vaccinate people against smallpox, at:** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p015gmdn>

**Spanish Flu – The 1918 Pandemic (H1N1 virus):** The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. In the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths worldwide is estimated to be at least 50 million. Mortality was high in people younger than 5 years old, 20-40 years old, and 65 years and older. The high mortality in healthy people, including those in the 20-40 year age group, was a unique feature of this pandemic. While the 1918 H1N1 virus has been synthesized and evaluated, the properties that made it so devastating are not well understood. With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.

Covid-19 will end, but how soon, depends on us.

### Martin goes for interview as a bus driver for the local council...

Martin does a written exam and a driving test and easily gets the job as a bus driver. He gets a smart uniform and is told to start at 9.00 am the following Monday on bus route 36. On Monday morning at 09:10 am, the depot Inspector is doing his rounds (here, think Blakey "On the buses") and finds Martin still sitting in the bus. The Inspector says: "What are you playing at, this bus should have left 10 minutes ago!"

Martin says: "I can't go, the ticket collector hasn't turned up!"

The Inspector explains: "on these modern buses you collect the fares as well".

Martin drives off on route 36. Four hours later the Inspector is wondering where the bus is as it should have been back hours ago, so he drives around the route looking for it and finds it laying on its side in a village pond and Martin is sitting on a bench with his head in his hands sobbing and in a terrible state...

The Inspector asks: "What happened, how did you end up in the pond?" Martin replies in a distraught voice: "I don't know what happened... I went upstairs to collect some fares and next thing it crashed into the pond!"



## Germany's 1930s plan to form an alliance with Britain

Sources: • <https://dailyuknews.com/us-news/inside-the-nazi-finishing-school-in-bexhill-on-sea-which-has-inspired-a-new-film-starring-judi-dench/> • <https://britishheritage.com/news/british-nazi-school/> • <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/14/unsettling-story-nazi-finishing-school-east-sussex/> • <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/19175977.six-minutes-midnight-bexhill-became-home-daughters-leading-nazis/> • <https://expats.one/news/inside-the-nazi-finishing-school-in-bexhill-on-sea-which-has-inspired-a-new-film-starring-judi-dench> • <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/14/unsettling-story-nazi-finishing-school-east-sussex/> • <https://highlandcinema.co.uk/film/six-minutes-to-midnight/>



In the 1930s, there were hopes that the sleepy seaside resort of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, could hold the key to reducing the risk of war with Germany. An enigmatic woman who by all accounts was well connected and dedicated to the Nazi regime, Helene Rocholl, ran a girl's finishing school, founded in about 1934 - a large Victorian Villa in Dorset Road. The school, whose badge had a Swastika on one side, the German imperial flag on the other and a Union Jack in the middle, took in up to 24 girls at any one time, aged 16 to 21.

Picture Credit: Screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pflwDA640yQ> from the Bexhill Museum. © Copyright duly acknowledged.

The girls came from 1 highest ranks of German society: among them was a goddaughter of Heinrich Himmler, the second-most powerful man in the Nazi regime, as well as Bettina von Ribbentrop, the daughter of the German foreign minister. Others included the niece to the German ambassador Herbert von Dirksen, and Isa von Bergen, the daughter of Hitler's ambassador to the Vatican. As well as daughters of the Nazi regime, there were also girls from the aristocratic "old" German society, such as Princess Herzeleide of Prussia\*.

\* Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/14/unsettling-story-nazi-finishing-school-east-sussex/>

### VIDEO

Go back in time - click this for information about the school >> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pflwDA640yQ>

### THE FILM: *Six Minutes to Midnight*

*Six Minutes to Midnight* is a 2020 British World War II drama film (the trailer is [here](#)) directed by Andy Goddard from a screenplay by Goddard, Celyn Jones and Eddie Izzard. It stars Eddie Izzard (who grew up in the town), Judi Dench, Carla Juri, James D'Arcy and Jim Broadbent. The film was released on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020, by Lionsgate. It will be available only on Sky Cinema from 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The film tells the story about events at Augusta Victoria College, a large Victorian villa in Dorset Road, Bexhill, which once housed a Nazi finishing school where up to two dozen daughters of the Nazi regime were sent to improve their English: In Summer 1939, influential families in Nazi Germany send their daughters to a finishing school in an English seaside town to learn the language and be ambassadors for a future looking National Socialist.

In the film, the College is under close scrutiny after the mysterious disappearance of teacher Mr. Wheatley, and his camera. In less than a week, the school governess Miss Rocholl (Judi Dench) hires a new teacher (Thomas Miller) to replace Wheatley. Eddie Izzard plays the role of Thomas Miller. Miller sees what is coming and tries to raise the alarm, but the authorities believe he is more of the problem, not the school. Miller has discovered that among his students are the daughters of the Nazi High Command.

Despite the storm clouds of war forming across Europe, the girls continue to learn deportment, Shakespeare, fitness, how to be a faithful member of Hitler's League of German Girls and they learn how to represent the ideal of German womanhood.

All this happens under the watchful eye of headmistress Miss Rocholl, and her devout assistant Ilse Keller (Carla Juri). When the body of the former teacher (Wheatley) is discovered, it triggers a sequence of deadly events where the girls and Miss Rocholl discover a world where loyalty is more important than truth. It also leaves Mr. Miller running from the police, accused of murder - and suspected of being a German spy.



Picture Credit: Screenshot from Trailer to *Six Minutes to Midnight*. © Copyright duly acknowledged.

## Remember these words?



*An Affair to Remember* was a 1957 classic tear jerking, romantic film about a couple who fall in love on an ocean voyage. The ship doesn't go down and stars Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr never give up as you can tell from the words below.

Picture Credit: [Cropped] "An Affair to Remember (1957)" by Susanlenox is marked with CC PDM 1.0 (Sex)(Dancing)(Kissing): "Do you think it will ever take the place of night baseball?" Deborah Kerr

(Elevator)(Rendezvous): "How about the top of the Empire State Building?" "Oh, yes. That's perfect. It's the nearest thing to heaven we have in New York." "Good. The 102nd floor. And don't forget to take the elevator." Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr

(Lines)(Surprise): "I was bored to death. I hadn't seen one attractive woman on this ship since we left. Now, isn't that terrible? I was alarmed. I said to myself, 'Don't beautiful women travel anymore?' And then I saw you, and I was saved - I hope." "Tell me, have you been getting results with a line like that, or would I be surprised?" "If you'd be surprised, I'd be surprised." Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr

(Champagne)(Beer): "Pink champagne - that's the kind of life we've both been used to. It might be a little difficult to - do you like beer?" Deborah Kerr

(Winter)(Memories): "Winter must be cold for those with no warm memories." Deborah Kerr

Source: [www.publicdomain.com/classics.html](http://www.publicdomain.com/classics.html)



## The Lewes Little Theatre

Sources: • <https://www.list.co.uk/place/59442-lewes-little-theatre/>  
 • <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/A13531661>  
 • <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/3afc321d-1124-4656-a5fb-a9ee4d4c5209>  
 • <https://www.lewestheatre.org/season/all>



Picture Credit:  
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Charles Dickens' *'Christmas Carol'*, directed by Darren Heather, was the last production (December 2019) at the theatre prior to the first Covid lockdown.

### Beginnings

The Rev. Kenneth Rawlings founded *Lewes Theatre Club* in 1939/40 to give the people of Lewes and nearby villages the chance to see and be involved in theatre. Some 10 years earlier, an amateur society called the *Lewes Players* had put on one-act plays in St Michael's church hall (formerly known as *The County Theatre*) in Watergate Lane – that is, until its compulsory purchase by East Sussex County Council in 1936 for an extension to Pelham House. The *Lewes Players* staged their first major production *Bird in Hand* at the Corn Exchange in 1930 and gained a reputation as one of the best amateur societies in the south of England\*.

\* winning first place with *Libel* at the British Drama League Festival in 1936

From the very beginning, *Lewes Theatre Club* set high standards which it has tried to maintain ever since. Members have worked hard over the years to enlarge and improve the theatre, but they always give priority to the quality of their stage productions. Now, more than 80 years later, the Club has grown to serve a wide catchment area covering much of Sussex. Everybody involved in the Club, from actors, directors, back-stage, and Front-of-House support, set designers and builders, light and sound staff, costume makers and many more, give their time freely and without payment.

### Premises

The theatre premises are located in Lancaster Street, Lewes. Over time, they have been expanded and now provide a comfortable 154-seater theatre with foyer and bar facilities for members and their guests. Before the Covid pandemic, the Club presented 6 to 8 main stage productions every year, between October and July.

In 1937, they bought (with the aid of a mortgage and donations from many local people including well-known economist John Maynard Keynes) a derelict chapel in Lancaster Street for £400, aiming to convert it into a theatre. Plans to license it as a place of public entertainment were aborted following a failed public appeal for funds, and running it as a private club was pursued instead.

### Refurbishment and Conversion

The conversion was undertaken by volunteers; plans were made for the theatre to open in September 1939, but the outbreak of the war led to an indefinite postponement - although between 1940 and 1943 some plays were staged in the theatre at irregular intervals. The first production, A P Herbert's *Double Demon* and Philip Johnson's *Today of all days*, took place in November 1940. In the autumn of 1943, with the help of a young professional actor, Bernard Archard, it was decided that it was now possible to begin mounting regular seasons of plays. In 1949 a limited company was formed under the title *Lewes Little Theatre Limited*, in which the ownership of the theatre and other capital property was vested.

The early 1950s saw the first major piece of theatre refurbishment with the opening of a small foyer and the replacement of the little gallery with a larger structure. In 1954, the adjoining derelict site was purchased from Lewes Borough Council and in 1964, an appeal was launched to rebuild the foyer and to provide wardrobe facilities; the foundation stone was laid in April 1966. In 1972 the Falstaff Bar opened, and the theatre's facilities were augmented by four new dressing rooms, lighting and control boxes.

The Covid pandemic has prompted the Club to think outside the box with plans for a radio play and other ideas.

### They 'trod the boards' in Lewes



Hove-born actress **Alexandra Bastedo** (best known as secret agent Sharron Macready in the 1968 British espionage and science fiction adventure series *'The Champions'*), played Catherine in *'A View from the Bridge'* in 1963 and Miranda in *'The Tempest'* in 1964 at the Lewes Little Theatre.

Picture Credit: "Alexandra Bastedo" by juiulong is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/)

Brighton-born actor **David Collings** (appeared in *'Sapphire and Steel'* as an eccentric, mercurial foil to David McCallum and Joanna Lumley and was a popular contributor to *'Doctor Who'*), also appeared at the Lewes Little Theatre.

Sadly, both stars have died: Alexandra in 2014 and David in 2020.

### Miscellany

As a limited company, Lewes Little Theatre Limited, was wound up in 1992, and its assets and functions transferred to Lewes Theatre Club. The Club is a Member of the **Little Theatre Guild** of Great Britain.

The Rev Kenneth Rawlings (c 1886-1969), a keen dramatist, was appointed rector of St Michael Church in 1925. It was his idea to form the *Lewes Theatre Club* in the first place and he served as a director for many years. He was also an actor and producer (including the first production in 1940).

The **Archives** at East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office (ESBHRO) ([here](#)) holds records about the Theatre going back to 1934.

Past productions going back to 1941 are listed [here](#).

### 2019 Birthday Celebrations

More than 20 of Sir Alan Ayckbourn's plays have been performed at the theatre. He made a rare appearance in March 2019 at *Lewes Little Theatre* to celebrate his own and the theatre's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at the launch of the 2019-2020 programme. The picture below shows the great man, the UK's most prolific living playwright, with his son Philip (a Lewes resident and also a playwright) being interviewed by Chris Bowers.



Picture Credit: Picture by Theatre Club member Keith Gilbert. Reprinted with permission. © Copyright 2019, Keith Gilbert, All Rights Reserved.

Web: <http://www.lewestheatre.org/>

Address: 17 Lancaster Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX

## The Psychology of Wearing Masks

By Dr Lynda Shaw, neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist. [www.drlyndashaw.com](http://www.drlyndashaw.com)



Face coverings are now compulsory in many indoor settings and the general public are gradually becoming accustomed to this new way of living but the directive from the government still receives a surprising amount of opposition. Neuroscientist, business psychologist and change specialist Dr Shaw looks at why we feel the way to do about masks in 2021.

1. **We rely on facial cues** – Humans derive meaning from non-verbal communication and heavily rely on facial cues in social situations. Facial expressions can convey sadness, excitement, anger, happiness, confusion, surprise and many more emotions; all of which are often conveyed through the mouth and eyes, and if someone is wearing sunglasses this can be a problem. Research has found that the brain doesn't like not to be able to see the mouth of the person we are talking to as we struggle to interpret expressions and emotional cues which in turn interferes with our feelings for survival.
2. **The brain misinterprets** – We feel anxious and uncomfortable because our brain is more likely to misinterpret a conversation between people wearing masks. For example, when the mouth is covered, we can confuse anger with disgust and fear with surprise which can add to anxiety and feeling of vulnerability. It is also obviously harder to hear people talking to us so there is a greater chance of miscommunication which means people are tempted to risk at least partly removing their mask to be heard.
3. **Cultural differences** – There is a surprising amount of opposition to masks particularly throughout the western hemisphere which suggests that there is a cultural bias towards this concept. Many people in eastern cultures, such as Asia, widely accept face coverings and have worn them for many years. Since Western countries have only recently been introduced to wearing masks in public, it is likely that it will take some time for this practice to feel commonplace.

4. **A threat to freedom** – Ultimately humans often don't react well to change and some individuals have even reportedly felt 'weak' for wearing a mask because they are conforming to rules being imposed on them. A different way to look at it is masks are a symbol of solidarity, of us all working together, and could be interpreted as a symbol of our strength in 2021.
5. **Mixed messages** put out about masks from the WHO and the government during the start of the pandemic which suggested that they were unnecessary have most likely made wearing masks harder for some people to be on board with. Masks have also caused conflict between strangers as many of us feel suspicious and unsafe around those not wearing a mask, sometimes leading to confrontation.
6. **Masks hide our identity** according to some, but we can also see them as an extension of our personalities and can be used to share individuality through their design, colour and even shape!
7. **Feeling self-conscious** – A survey conducted by Imperial College London in June 2020 – at <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/articles-reports/2020/06/04/covid-19-britons-still-wont-wear-face-masks> - found that there were several other reasons for why people were put off wearing masks. For example, 52% said they felt self-conscious and 47% said they felt embarrassed, but it would be interesting to research now those numbers again a few months on as we have become more accustomed to them.

### How to Approach Masks as a change in Lifestyle:

8. **Educate** – Understanding is key. Keep the messaging clear, consistent, and concise. Be clear about what is law, policy or guidelines and stick to it. Make sure you are setting the right example yourself to those you hope to influence positively.
9. **Offer tips** – One way to diminish the feeling of anxiety associated with miscommunications when wearing masks is to try to take a good humoured and relaxed approach. Accept that you may misinterpret and make mistakes or ask for things to be repeated several times. It's ok, everyone is in the same boat.
10. **Time** – It will take time for society to get use to this. With time, more and more people will accept wearing masks. This is known as crowd behaviour which is when several people in a 'tribe' (close circle) perform an action that then slowly influences the rest of the group to follow suit.

### About the Author

Dr Lynda Shaw is cognitive neuroscientist and chartered psychologist, a Forbes contributor, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Fellow of the Professional Speakers Association as well as an entrepreneur and author of adult and children's books.

Dr Shaw has lectured in Psychology and Neuroscience at various Universities in the UK and conducted research on brain function and impairment, specialising in consciousness, emotion, and the effects of ageing. She was honoured to receive the Professional Speaking Award of Excellence in October 2017 - the highest accolade for UK speakers given by their peers.



"I don't trust anyone who's nice to me but rude to the waiter. Because they would treat me the same way if I were in that position."

**Muhammad Ali**

Picture Credit: "Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali)" by charlywkarl is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0



Picture Credit: "Boxing Gloves worn by Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling" by national museum of american history is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

"The three toughest fighters I ever fought were Sugar Ray Robinson, Sugar Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Robinson. I fought Sugar so many times, I'm surprised I'm not diabetic."

**Jake LaMotta**

"That man was beautiful. Timing, speed, reflexes, rhythm, his body, everything was beautiful. And to me, still, I would say pound for pound...I'd say I'm the greatest heavyweight of all time, but pound for pound, I still say Sugar Ray Robinson was the greatest of all time."

**Muhammad Ali**

## The types of rock: Igneous, Metamorphic and Sedimentary



Picture Credit: "Erta Ale Volcano Magma lake" by pierre c. 38 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

There's an interesting article on ZME Science by its founder Mihai Andrei at:

<https://www.zmescience.com/science/geology/types-of-rock/> He says it's the first thing you learn in a geology class — very briefly **there are three types of rock:**

- **Igneous** — they form from the cooling of magma deep inside the earth. They often have large crystals (you can see them with the naked eye).
- **Metamorphic** — they are formed through the change (metamorphosis) of igneous and sedimentary rocks. They can form both underground and at the surface.
- **Sedimentary** — they are formed through the solidification of sediment. They can be formed from organic remains (such as limestone), or from the cementing of other rocks.

Read the article. It is very interesting even if you haven't followed geology before. As a taster, here's something on 'magma' which is mentioned above:

### Magma

Magma is the heart of any igneous rock. It is composed of a mixture of molten or semi-molten rock, along with gases and other volatile elements. As you go deeper underground, the temperature rises; go further and you'll eventually reach the Earth's mantle — a huge layer of solid rock surrounding the Earth's core (which, in geologic time, behaves as a viscous liquid). As you probably know, when magma cools, it turns into rock; if it cools while still underground at high temperatures (but at temperatures still lower than that of the magma), the cooling process will be slow, giving crystals time to develop. That is why you see rocks such as granite with big crystals — the magma had time to cool off. The crystals are also differentiated.

However, if the magma erupts or is cooled rapidly, you instead get a volcanic rock — not igneous but originating from lava. The classical example here is basalt, which can have many small crystals or very few large ones. Volcanic rocks are also called extrusive igneous rocks, as opposed to intrusive igneous rocks. Some volcanic rocks (like obsidian) do not have any crystals at all.



## Save time by using Shortcuts on your Keyboard



### Are you using the shortcuts on your computer keyboard?

Ok, let's start from the beginning.

You know what a keyboard is, I hope. There's one above. It's like mine.

At the bottom left hand corner, you can see the key **ctrl**. That's the Control key. It's a 'modifier' key which, when pressed in conjunction with another key, performs a certain action. It rarely performs any function when pressed just on its own.

This 'tutorial' is about a Microsoft computer keyboard, but similar rules apply to Apple computers.

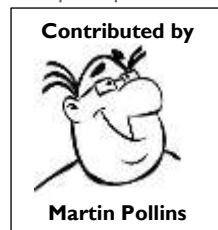
### List of Control Key Shortcuts

Each of the following works by pressing the Ctrl key and, while holding it down, pressing the other key or keys as shown:

- Ctrl+A** These two keys will select all text or other objects in your document.
- Ctrl+B** Embolden the text you highlight.
- Ctrl+C** Copy any selected text or other object.
- Ctrl+D** Bookmark an open web page or open font window in Microsoft Word.
- Ctrl+E** Centre the text or picture in your document.
- Ctrl+F** Open the 'find' window.
- Ctrl+G** Open Find in a browser and word processors.
- Ctrl+H** Open the Find and Replace in Notepad, Microsoft Word, and WordPad
- Ctrl+I** Italicize text.
- Ctrl+J** View downloads in browsers and set justify alignment in Microsoft Word.
- Ctrl+K** Create a hyperlink (or edit an existing one) for the highlighted text in Microsoft Word and many HTML editors.
- Ctrl+L** Select address bar in a browser or left align text in a word processor.
- Ctrl+M** Indent selected text in word processors and other programs.
- Ctrl+N** Create a new page or document.
- Ctrl+O** Open a file in most programs.

- Ctrl+P** Open a print window to print the page you are viewing.
- Ctrl+R** Reload page in browser or right align text in a word processor.
- Ctrl+S** Save the document or file.
- Ctrl+T** Create a new tab in an Internet browser or adjust tabs in word processors.
- Ctrl+U** Underline selected text.
- Ctrl+V** Paste any text or another object that was last copied.
- Ctrl+W** Close open tab in a browser or close a document in Word.
- Ctrl+X** Cut selected text or another object that has been highlighted.
- Ctrl+Y** These keys will redo any undo action.
- Ctrl+End** Moves cursor to the end of a document instead of end of the line.
- Ctrl+Z** Pressing these two keys will undo the last action.
- Ctrl+Esc** Open the Windows Start Menu.
- Ctrl+Tab** Switch between open tabs in browsers or other tabbed programs.
- Ctrl+⇧ Shift+Tab** Will go backwards (right to left).
- Ctrl+⇧ Shift+Z** Redo
- Ctrl+]** Decrease font size
- Ctrl+[** Increase font size
- Ctrl+=** Toggle font subscript
- Ctrl+⇧ Shift+=** Toggle font superscript

And perhaps the most useful ones of all:



Martin Pollins

- Ctrl+⇧ Shift+C** Copies the format and colour of text you have highlighted.
- Ctrl+⇧ Shift+V** Pastes (replicates) the format, and colour of text you have highlighted, as above.

Please let me know if you would like help on other shortcuts: [mpollins@bizezia.com](mailto:mpollins@bizezia.com)

### Using an AA Battery to do something different

Picture Credit: "Birds Eye Fish Fingers (1956)" by Bradford Timeline is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



Want to experiment with something? Why not make a Homopolar Motor.

What's that you might ask?

Wikipedia defines a homopolar motor is a direct current electric motor with two magnetic poles, the conductors of which always cut unidirectional lines of magnetic flux by rotating a conductor around a fixed axis so that the conductor is at right angles to a static magnetic field.

Actually, it's not very useful and impossibly inefficient but it's certainly weird. It's a way to spend some of your spare time, and most of us have plenty of that, don't we?

Just watch the video at <https://youtu.be/RGFtpOZxThc> to see if you agree.

And no, it's not trickery. There's an explanation of how it works at: <https://www.first4magnets.com/blog/what-is-a-homopolar-motor-and-how-does-one-work/>

The picture above is a screen shot from the video.

### 'Captain' Birds Eye



Picture Credit: "Birds Eye Fish Fingers (1956)" by Bradford Timeline is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Clarence Frank Birdseye II (9<sup>th</sup> December 1886 – 7<sup>th</sup> October 1956) was an American inventor, businessman, and naturalist, best known for developing a process for freezing foods in small packages suitable for retailing, which he came across after visiting the Arctic. As a result, he is considered to be the father of the frozen food industry, creating General Seafood Corporation as his company to promote the process – a flash-freezing method that is still used up to this day.

Clarence Birdseye was the sixth of nine children of Clarence Frank Birdseye, a lawyer in an insurance firm, and Ada Jane Birdseye. He was taught by the Inuit (Alaska natives) how to ice fish under very thick ice. In -40 °C weather, he discovered that the fish he caught froze almost instantly, and when thawed, tasted fresh. He recognised immediately that the frozen seafood sold in New York was of lower quality than the frozen fish of Labrador, and that this knowledge could be lucrative. When food is frozen slowly, at temperatures near the freezing point, ice crystals form within the animal or vegetable cells; when the food thaws, cellular fluid leaks from the damaged tissue, giving the food a mushy or dry consistency. Rapid freezing, at lower temperatures, gives crystals less time to form and thus does less damage.

Clarence was right and, as we all know, the name 'Birds Eye' still remains a leading frozen-food brand today.

### The Love Dress

The mother-in-law stopped unexpectedly by the recently married couple's house. She rang the doorbell and stepped into the house. She saw her daughter-in-law standing naked by the door.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"I'm waiting for my husband to come home from work.," the daughter-in-law answered.

"But you're NAKED!" the mother-in-law exclaimed.

"This is my Love Dress," the daughter-in-law explained.

"Love Dress? But you're naked!"

"My husband loves me to wear this dress! It makes him happy and it makes me happy. I would appreciate it if you would leave because he will be home from work any minute." The mother-in-law was tired of all this romantic talk and left.

On the way home, she thought about the Love Dress. When she got home she got undressed, showered, put on her best perfume and waited by the front door.

Finally, her husband got home. He walked in and saw her standing naked by the door.

"What are you doing?" He exclaimed.

"This is My Love Dress." She replied.

"Needs ironing," he said.

## 'Decimalisation is too complicated'

Source: Christopher Webster on Quora.com



Before decimalisation, the late, great author Terry Pratchett wrote in 'Good omens' that the British had a non-decimal currency that was like this:

*'Two farthings made an ha'penny. Two ha'pennies made a penny. Three pennies made a thru'penny bit. Two thru'penny bits made a sixpence or tanner. Two tanners made a shilling or bob.'*

*Two bob made a florin. A florin and a tanner made a half-crown. (Two half-crowns or five shillings could be called a dollar, incorrectly). Four half-crowns made a ten-shilling note or ten-bob note. Two ten bob notes made a pound and a pound and a shilling [added] made a guinea.'*

Dear Terry said that the British resisted decimalisation because they thought it would be too complicated.

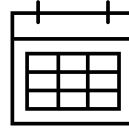
### Reminder:

It happened a long time ago – just over 50 years in fact.

Decimal Day in the United Kingdom and in Ireland was on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1971, the day on which each country decimalised its respective £sd currency of pounds, shillings, and pence. Before this date, in the United Kingdom, the British pound was made up of 20 shillings, each of which was made up of 12 pence, a total of 240 pence.

## Why does September come from the word 'Seven'?

Source: <https://www.dictionary.com/e/september/>



For many, the month of September signals the end of summer, the beginning of autumn, and the start of a new school year. In the calendar, September marks the beginning of the series of months named after their numerical position in the year.

Strangely enough, however, September is not named after the number nine.

### What does September mean?

September comes from the Latin root *septem-*, meaning 'seven', because in the original Roman republican calendar September was the seventh month of the year rather than the ninth. The Roman calendar was only 10 months long and included the following months: Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, and December. The last six months were assigned names according to their ordinal numbers. *Quintilis* is the fifth month, *Sextilis* is the sixth month, and so on.

### When did the calendar change?

It wasn't until 46 BC, when Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar (named after Caesar, himself), that the year grew to include two more months, January and February. *Quintilis* and *Sextilis* were later renamed *July* and *August* in honour of Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar, but despite repeated attempts to change them, the names for September, October, November, and December not only stuck, but spread to other languages as well.

The strangeness of calling the ninth month 'Seventh Month' didn't seem to bother Old English speakers. *September* replaced the Old English forms *Hāligmōnāð* and *Hærfestmōnāð*, which mean "harvest month" in modern English.

If the Roman senate had their way, we might now be calling September *Tiberius* or *Antoninus*, after two Roman Emperors. Or we might have ended up calling September *Augustus* as followers of the Emperor Commodus hoped, or *Germanicus*, as Emperor Domitian wanted.

Would these names have been any better than calling the ninth month *September*?

## It happened the other night, at the bar...



An elderly looking gentleman, (at least in his mid-nineties) very well dressed, hair well-groomed, in a great looking suit, flower in his lapel, smelling slightly of a good aftershave, presenting a well-looked-after confident image, walks into an upscale cocktail lounge.

Seated at the bar is an elderly looking and well-dressed lady.

The gentleman walks over, sits alongside her, smiles, orders a drink, takes a sip, then turns to her, and says, "So tell me, do I come here often?"



## Playing Cards – a short History

Source: <https://www.wopc.co.uk/history/earlyrefs>



Picture Credit: [Cropped] "The Royal Hearts" by incurable\_hipie is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Playing Cards are believed to have originated in China and then spread to India and Persia. From Persia they are believed to have spread to Egypt during the era of Mamluk control, and from there into Europe through both the Italian and Iberian peninsulas in the second half of the 14th century.

The history of playing cards in Europe commences around 1370-1380. Out of an apparent void, a constellation of references in early literature emerge pointing to the

sudden arrival of playing cards, principally in Belgium, Germany, Spain and Italy and very soon afterwards we hear of them being banned by the authorities. As well as the documentary evidence, we can also look at contemporary illustrations of card playing. Of course dice and certain board games were already long-established, and so playing cards were a new addition to the repertoire of gambling pastimes. But they brought with them anti-social behaviour on account of the dishonesty or cheating which occurred in the less-reputable gaming houses. This led inevitably to bans and prohibitions as preachers demonised the game and the authorities devised ways to regulate the new craze. At the same time, we learn that upper classes and nobility enjoyed courtly games and also spent sums of money at gambling.

Click here for more information about Playing Cards and Gaming:  
<https://www.wopc.co.uk/history/gaming>

Wikipedia says this:

- *A playing card is a piece of specially prepared card stock, heavy paper, thin cardboard, plastic-coated paper, cotton-paper blend, or thin plastic that is marked with distinguishing motifs. Often the front (face) and back of each card has a finish to make handling easier. Some patterns of Tarot playing card are also used for divination, although bespoke cards for this use are more common. Playing cards are typically palm-sized for convenient handling, and usually are sold together in a set as a deck of cards or pack of cards.*

- *The most common type of playing card is that found in the French-suited, standard 52-card pack, of which the most common design is the English pattern, followed by the Belgian-Genoese pattern. However, many countries use other, traditional types of playing card, including those that are German, Italian, Spanish and Swiss-suited. Tarot cards (also known as Tarocks or tarocchi) are an old genre of playing card that is still very popular in France, central and Eastern Europe and Italy. Asia, too, has regional cards such as the Japanese hanafuda.*
- *Playing cards are available in a wide variety of styles, as decks may be custom-produced for casinos and magicians (sometimes in the form of trick decks), made as promotional items, or intended as souvenirs, artistic works, educational tools, or branded accessories. Decks of cards or even single cards are also collected as a hobby or for monetary value. Cards may also be produced for trading card sets or collectible card games, which can comprise hundreds if not thousands of unique cards.*

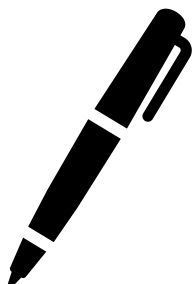
### The original Chinese Cards

Source: <https://www.tradgames.org.uk/games/playing-cards.htm>

The original Chinese cards appear to have been related to the Chinese paper money of the time. In fact it seems likely that people created the cards by copying paper money and then both played with and for these cards. A pack of Chinese cards were not at all like European cards of today. In appearance, although made of flexible cardboard they are much thinner (Kwan Pa'i cards are only 3/8 of an inch wide). There were two main types of Chinese Playing Card:

- (1) **Kwan Pa'i** playing cards contain only three suits - coins, strings of coins and myriads of strings of coins. A pack consisted of 30 cards - 9 of each suit plus an honour card, as follows:
  - Coins - The honour card is called the 'Red Flower'.
  - Strings of Coins - each string consisting of 10 coins. The honour card is called the 'White Flower'.
  - Myriads of strings of Coins. A myriad represents 10 strings of 10 coins. Each of these was illustrated with a portrait of a character from the old Chinese folk tale 'The story of the River Banks' plus the chinese symbol for the appropriate number. The honour card was called "Old thousand".
- (2) **Lut Chi** was the other main type of playing cards - these appeared in the South of China which has an additional suit - tens of myriads of coins. Lut Chi cards are also wider - typically 1 & 1/8 x 2 & 1/4 inches. Lut Chi cards have 4 suits and superficially some pictures of the suits bear a resemblance to the original playing card suits of Asia and Europe e.g. the strings of coins can look like sticks or batons.

## It's common sense really...



During the height of the space race in the 1960's, NASA quickly discovered that ballpoint pens would not work in the zero gravity confines of its space capsules.

After considerable research and development, the *Astronaut Pen* was developed at a cost of \$1 million. The pen was great. It worked in zero gravity, upside down, underwater, on almost any surface including glass and also enjoyed some modest success as a novelty item back here on earth.

The Soviet Union, when faced with the same problem, used a pencil.

## How to play Backgammon

Sources: <https://www.farrar-tanner.co.uk/>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backgammon>  
<https://www.wikihow.com/Play-Backgammon>

Picture Credit: "Backgammon" by Tord Mattsson is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND



Backgammon is one of the oldest known board games with a history that can be traced back nearly 5,000 years to archaeological discoveries in Mesopotamia. It is a **two-player** game where each player has **fifteen pieces** (checkers or men) that move between **twenty-four triangles** (points) according to the roll of **two dice**. The triangles are grouped into **four quadrants each of six triangles**.

### The Quadrants

The quadrants are referred to as a player's home board and outer board, and the opponent's home board and outer board. The home and outer boards are separated from each other by a ridge down the centre of the board – the ridge is called the bar.

The objective of the game is to be first to bear off, i.e. move all fifteen checkers off the board.

The game involves a combination of both strategy and luck (from rolling dice). While the dice may determine the outcome of a single game, the better player will accumulate the better record over series of many games. With each roll of the dice, players must choose from numerous options for moving their checkers and anticipate possible counter moves by the opponent. The optional use of a doubling cube allows players to raise the stakes during the game.

The game is played on a folding wooden board with checkers and dice. The object of the game for the players is to remove all their checkers from the board.

### The Checkers

Backgammon playing pieces may be called pieces, checkers, draughts, stones, men, counters, pawns, discs, pips, chips, or nips.

### The Board

If you click here: [www.shorturl.at/hosDV](http://www.shorturl.at/hosDV) you can see the Board laid out at the start of a game and what happens as it progresses when the players move their following the roll of their dice.

### Setting Up

Checkers are arranged with two on point 24, five on point 13, three on point 8 and five on point 6. To start the game both players roll a single dice, the player with the highest roll begins.

The points are numbered for either player starting in that player's home board. The outermost point is the twenty-four point, which is also the opponent's one point. Each player has fifteen checkers of his own colour. The initial arrangement of checkers is: two on each player's twenty-four point, five on each player's thirteen point, three on each player's eight point, and five on each player's six point. Both players have their own pair of dice and a dice cup used for shaking. A doubling cube, with the numerals 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 on its faces, is used to keep track of the current stake of the game.

### Rolls of the Dice

The results of the initial dice rolls determine how many points you may move your checkers. For example, if on your roll, a 4 and 3 are rolled, you may move one checker four spaces and the other three spaces. Alternatively, you may move only one checker a total of the dice roll, in this example, 7 points.

Checkers are always moved towards your home board onto a point of a lower number and can only be moved onto an open point. **An open point is occupied by no more than one of the opponent's checkers.** To move one checker using the total of the dice roll, the intermediate points must be open points.

If a double is rolled the numbers on the dice are used twice, for example if a double 2 is rolled, checkers can be moved 2 points four times. Players must use all numbers rolled if possible. If only one can be played, this must be used. If two can be played, the highest roll must be used.

### Hitting and Entering

A blot is a point occupied by a single checker. If a blot is hit during the opponent's play, the checker must be placed on the ridge along the centre of the board, known as a (or the) bar. If you have any checkers on the bar, these must be entered into the opponent's home board during your next turn. Checkers are entered onto an open point corresponding to numbers rolled. For example, if a 6 and 4 are rolled, the checker must be placed on point 6 or 4 of the opponent's home board.

As many checkers on the bar must be entered (return to the game) as possible. If there are no open points corresponding to the dice roll, the player loses a turn. If only one checker can be entered, the remainder of the player's turn is lost. When the player has no more checkers on the bar, play resumes as normal.

### Bearing Off

When a player has all their checkers in their home board, they can start removing them from the board: this is known as bearing off. This is done by rolling both dice and removing a checker from each corresponding point. For example, if a 6 and 4 is rolled, a checker can be removed from point 6 and 4. If there are no checkers on point 4, one must be removed from a higher numbered point. If there are no checkers on a higher numbered point, you must remove a checker from the highest numbered point available.

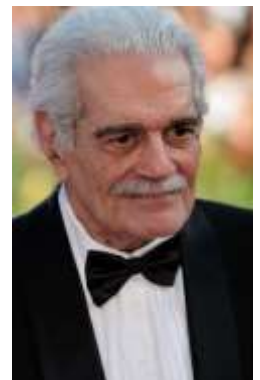
Checkers can still be hit while bearing off and must be placed onto the bar and entered back into play as detailed above. When a first player bears off all of their fifteen checkers, the game is won!

### Other Rules

There are other rules not covered here such as Doubling, Redoubling, and Gammons. **Backgammon chouette** (click [here](#)) is a variant of backgammon designed for three or more players. Before you try to play a game of backgammon chouette, you may want to take some time to learn how to play regular backgammon first and the foregoing will hopefully get you started if you haven't played the game before. Go on, it's fun...

### Celebrity Players

Over the years, many well-known celebrities have been aficionados of Backgammon. They include, Tina Turner, Cole Porter, Humphrey Bogart, John Huston, Paul Newman, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald, and, perhaps the best known of all - Omar Sharif, whose name has been



Picture Credit: "File:Omar Sharif 66ème Festival de Venise (Mostra) 6.jpg" by nicolas genin from Paris, France is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

### Contributed by



Martin Pollins

used to promote tournaments, books, and other backgammon products (there's even an electronic version named after him).

## An introduction to the 'Antikythera Mechanism'

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antikythera\\_mechanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antikythera_mechanism)

Picture Credit: [Cropped] "Ancient Greece Antikythera Mechanism Model" by Gary Lee Todd, Ph.D. is marked with CC0 1.0



The Antikythera mechanism is an ancient hand-powered Greek analogue 'computer' which has also been described as the first example of a device used to predict astronomical positions and eclipses for calendar and astrological purposes decades in advance. It could also be used to track the four-year cycle of athletic games which was similar to an Olympiad, the cycle of the ancient Olympic Games.

This artefact was retrieved from the sea in 1901 and identified on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1902 as containing a gear by archaeologist Valerios Stais, among wreckage retrieved from a shipwreck off the coast of the Greek island Antikythera, from which it derived its name. The instrument is believed to have been designed and constructed by Greek scientists and has been variously dated to about 87 BC, or between 150 and 100 BC, or to 205 BC, or to within a generation before the shipwreck, which has been dated to approximately 70–60 BC.

### Were there any other ancient devices like the Antikythera mechanism?

Source: <https://www.quora.com/Were-there-any-other-ancient-devices-like-the-Antikythera-mechanism/answer/Spencer-Alexander-McDaniel>

**Spencer Alexander McDaniel** says this on Quora (see link above): "In popular science writings and in popular culture, the Antikythera mechanism is usually described as an "ancient Greek computer." It is usually presented as an astonishing example of how incredibly advanced ancient Greek technology was and it is usually presented in such a way that makes it sound as though we had no idea that devices like it even existed before it was discovered. The truth, though, is that devices like the Antikythera mechanism are actually well-attested in surviving ancient written sources and classical scholars already knew that these kinds of devices existed in antiquity long before the Antikythera mechanism was discovered. The Antikythera mechanism's significance is not because it is the only device of its kind that ever existed, but rather because it is the only one of its kind that is known to have survived to the present day."

### It wasn't really a computer, was it?

The Antikythera mechanism is almost universally described in popular sources as a 'computer'. This description is *technically* correct albeit misleading. Yes, it computes things, but it is only a 'computer' in the same way that an abacus or a mechanical analogue clock is a 'computer' but not in the sense that most people think of when they hear that word today and is nowhere even close to the level of technology that you would find in a modern laptop or smartphone.

### Intriguing Facts

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/81445/15-intriguing-facts-about-antikythera-mechanism>

In June 2016, Kristina Killgrove wrote an article in Mental Floss titled: 15 Intriguing Facts About the Antikythera Mechanism (see the link above), in which she said researchers from the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project had announced new insights about the mysterious Antikythera mechanism, an unusual artifact that has intrigued archaeologists, classicists, historians, and the public for decades. Among the 15 facts listed in the article, number 7 says that Hipparchus, the inventor of trigonometry and primarily known as an ancient astronomer, may have created the mechanism:

*"Hipparchus was born in what is now Turkey around 190 BCE and worked and taught primarily on the island of Rhodes. His works survive almost entirely through later Greek and Roman authors. Hipparchus was one of the first thinkers to speculate that the Earth revolved around the Sun, but he could never prove it. Hipparchus created the first trigonometric table in his attempts to solve problems related to spheres and is therefore known as the father of trigonometry [the branch of mathematics that studies relationships between side lengths and angles of triangles]. Because of these other discoveries—and because Cicero mentions a planetary device that was constructed by Posidonius, who took over Hipparchus's school on Rhodes after his death—the Antikythera mechanism is often attributed to Hipparchus. New research, though, has shown handwriting of two different people on the mechanism, suggesting it was likely created in a workshop or family business."*



Picture Credit: "Hipparchus, Monument" by cobalt123 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



### The Humble Sausage...

Picture Credit: "There is no aspect of sausage making that isn't dirty" by sparkle-motion is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



#### Introduction

I made my first\* sausage when I was around 12 years of age as a delivery boy on Saturday mornings. In those days, the village butcher in Hassocks (Walter Thair) delivered meat to his customers – or rather, he had me do it for him. I can't recall why, as I was employed simply to deliver meats but I was shown how to use a machine which converted pieces of pork or beef or other animal bits into sausages. Today, Health & Safety regulations would probably prevent a 12-year old to use such a wonderful machine.

\* Actually, now that I think about it, it was also the last time.

#### History

The word "sausage" comes from the Middle English *sausige*, which came from *sal*, Latin for *salt*. In France, they are *saussissons* and in Germany, *wurst*. They were originally made as a way to preserve meat.

It was probably the Romans who were among the first to preserve meat in sausage form. They learned over time that salt, smoking methods, and spices improved the process and the taste, and by the middle ages, sausage was being made all over Europe. But the Romans weren't the first to make sausages. The Romans loved a good sausage but they weren't the first ones to make one. That honour belongs to the Sumerians around 3,100 BC in a region called Mesopotamia - roughly where modern day Iraq, Kuwait and some of Saudi Arabia are today.

#### What are Sausages made from?

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausage>

Sausages are a meat product usually made from ground meat, often pork, beef, or poultry, along with salt, spices and other flavourings. Other ingredients such as grains or breadcrumbs may be included as fillers or extenders. Some sausages include other ingredients for flavour.

The word "sausage" can refer to the loose sausage meat, which can be formed into patties or stuffed into a skin. When referred to as "a sausage," the product is usually cylindrical and encased in a skin.

Typically, a sausage is formed in a casing traditionally made from intestine but sometimes from synthetic materials.

Sausages that are sold raw are cooked in many ways, including pan-frying, broiling and barbecuing. Some sausages are cooked during processing and the casing may then be removed.

Sausage-making is a traditional food preservation technique. Sausages CAN be preserved by curing, drying (often in association with fermentation or culturing, which can contribute to preservation), smoking, or freezing. Some cured or smoked sausages can be stored without refrigeration. Most fresh sausages must be refrigerated or frozen until they are cooked.

Sausages come in a huge range of national and regional varieties, which differ by their flavouring or spicing ingredients (garlic, peppers, wine, etc.), the meat(s) used in them and their manner of preparation.

### The Secrets for a Perfect Marriage



George and Lucy had been married for more than 60 years. They had shared everything. They had talked about everything.

They had kept no secrets from each other, except that Lucy had a shoe box in the top of her wardrobe that she had warned her husband never to open or ask her about.

For all of these years, George had never thought about the box, but one day, poor Lucy got very sick and the doctor said she would not recover.

In trying to sort out their affairs, George took down the shoe box and took it to his wife's bedside.

Lucy agreed that it was time that he should know what was in the box. When George opened it, he found two crocheted dolls and a stack of money totalling £95,000.

George asked Lucy about the contents. "When we were to be married," she said, "my grandmother told me the secret of a happy marriage was to never argue. She told me that if I ever got angry with you, I should just keep quiet and crochet a doll."

George was so moved; he had to fight back tears. Only two precious dolls were in the box.

Lucy had only been angry with him twice in all those years of living and loving. He almost burst with happiness.

"Darling, dearest Lucy," George said, "that explains the dolls, but what about all of this money? Where did it come from sweetheart?"

"Oh," she said. "That's the money I made from selling the dolls."

## The Industrial Revolution in World History

Extracted from a book of that title written by Peter N. Stearns, © Copyright, 2013 Taylor & Francis, published by Westview Press  
Picture Credit: "Industrial revolution" by blvesboy is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0



The Industrial Revolution radically changed the world. If measured by shifts in GDP and population, it was a far greater change than anything before or since, and it dwarfed the economic impact of later technologies such as the internet.

As profound as the economic changes were, the social changes were more so, permanently altering the structure of families and communities from one based around extended families -- imbedded in clans and local communities, who largely worked together in business and child-raising -- to one in which families were more separated from each other, and from their communities, during workdays:

*"In northern France in the early 1840s, Louis Motte-Bossut set up a large mechanical wool-spinning factory. His parents had run a much smaller, more traditional textile operation, manufacturing with only a simple sort of machinery; they prided themselves on being able to watch over every detail of their operation and directly supervise a small labor force. Motte-Bossut, in contrast, aspired to make France the factory equal of England - during a visit there he had illegally taken away the plans for state-of-the-art factory equipment. His large factory quickly became one of the leaders in the region, but his parents would not set foot in it, judging its scale and its riskiness to be genuinely immoral.*

*"In Germany, Alfred Krupp was born in 1812 into a successful merchant family in the city of Essen. His father, however, a poor businessman, had decimated the family fortune; Friedrich Krupp had twice set up steel-manufacturing plants with swindling partners, the outcome being his failure and public disgrace. Alfred was sent to work in a factory at age thirteen, while his sister laboured as a governess. In 1826 Alfred began his own firm on the basis of his meagre inheritance, manufacturing scissors and hand tools. No technical genius, but bent on avoiding his father's mistakes, Krupp applied a single-minded devotion to his firm's success. As a result, he built one of the giant metallurgical firms during the crucible decades of German industrialisation. ...*

*"Factory owners formed only part of industrialization's human story, of course. Workers also shaped the industrial revolution, and they, too, faced change, often involuntarily, in making their contribution. Children formed one category. They had always worked, in most social groups. They assisted their parents on the farm and in the household and provided some of the menial labour for craft manufacturing, often under strict employer control. They continued to work in the early factories but in a much less personal atmosphere, amid the dangers of powered machinery and the new demands for physical exertion or unrelenting pace.*

*"Government hearings held in Great Britain a few decades after the industrial revolution began there pinpointed what was probably the most shocking exploitation of child labour: Children had moved from providing supplemental labour to being beasts of burden.*

*"For the growing cotton factories in Lancashire -- greedy for workers and particularly interested in the 'small and nimble fingers' of children to help tend the machines at low cost -- gangs of children were recruited from the urban poorhouses. Many came from families displaced from rural manual manufacturing by the expansion of the very factories they now served. As factory hands, they were housed in miserable dormitories and often beaten to spur production. Shifts of children worked day and night, alternating with time in the dormitory.*

*"As an 1836 report suggested, 'It is a common tradition in Lancashire that the beds never get cold.' Not surprisingly, some children committed suicide, having been driven to physical and emotional despair."*

### 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.

Eclectic excerpts delivered to your email every day



## Unusual words: 'Legerity'

Legerity is a noun, and it means: physical or mental quickness; nimbleness; agility.

### Origins of the word

Legerity, "mental or physical agility" comes from Middle French legereté (lightness, thoughtlessness), a derivative of leger, liger (light in weight). Leger is a regular French phonological development of Vulgar Latin leviārius (light in weight), equivalent to Latin levis. The original and now obsolete English meaning of legerity was "lack of seriousness, frivolity" (its French sense). The current sense "nimbleness, quickness" dates from the end of the 16th century.

Source: Dictionary.com

## Military Intelligence

The first instance of an organisation which would later become the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) was the Department of Topography & Statistics, formed by Major Thomas Best Jervis in 1854 in the early stages of the Crimean War. When the War Office was subsumed into the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 1964, the DMI was absorbed into the Defence Intelligence Staff.

### Sections

During World War I, British secret services were divided into numbered sections named **Military Intelligence, department number x**, (abbreviated to Mlx, such as MII for information management). For example, Military Intelligence 9 (MI9) was the WWII organisation that engineered the escape of Allied forces from behind enemy lines. They set up clandestine routes that zig-zagged across Nazi-occupied Europe, enabling soldiers and airmen to make their way home. Secret agents and resistance fighters risked their lives and those of their families to hide the men. The branch, department, section, and sub-section numbers varied through the life of the departments, but include:

| Name   | World War I   | World War II  | Current status   |
|--------|---|---|--|
| MII    | Secretariat, including:   | Administration  | Reorganised around 1919  |
|        | MI1b: Interception and cryptanalysis.   |   | MI1b is an ancestor of GCHQ                                    |
|        | MI1c: The Foreign Section of the Secret Service Bureau.   |   |  |
| MI2    | Geographical information (Americas, Latin countries, Balkans, Ottoman Empire, Trans-Caucasus, Arabia, Africa less French and Spanish possessions) | Information on Middle and Far East, Scandinavia, US, USSR, Central and South America.   | These functions were absorbed into MI3 in 1941.                |
| MI3    | Geographical Information (rest of Europe)   | Information on Eastern Europe and the Baltic Provinces (plus USSR & Scandinavia after mid-1941).                                  | Functions absorbed into MI6 in 1945                            |
| MI4    | Topographical information and military maps   | Geographical section—maps.  | Transferred to Military Operations in April 1940               |
| MI5    | Counter-espionage and military policy in dealing with the civil population (the former Home Section of the Secret Service Bureau).                | Liaison with the Security Service (counterintelligence)   | Active   |
| MI6    | Legal and economic section dealing with the MI finance as well as economic intelligence and personnel records. Monitoring arms trafficking.       | Liaison with Secret Intelligence Service  | Active   |
| MI7    | Press censorship and propaganda.  | Press and propaganda  | Transferred to the Ministry of Information in around May 1940. |
| MI8    | Cable censorship  | Signals interception and communications security.   | Merged into MI6 in 1941  |
| MI9    | Postal censorship   | Escaped British Prisoner of War (PoW) debriefing, escape and evasion (also: enemy PoW interrogation until 1941).                  | Operated until 1945  |
| MI10   | Foreign Military Attaches   | Technical Intelligence worldwide.   | Merged into MI6 after World War II                             |
| MI11   |   | Military Security.  | Disbanded at the end of WWII                                   |
| MI12   |   | Liaison with censorship organisations in Ministry of Information, military censorship.  |  |
| MI13   |   | (Not used)  |  |
| MI14   |   | Germany and German-occupied territories (aerial photography).   | Operated until spring 1943                                     |
| MI15   |   | Aerial photography. In the spring of 1943, aerial photography moved to the Air Ministry and MI15 became air defence intelligence. | Operated during the World War II era.                          |
| MI16   |   | Scientific Intelligence (formed 1945).[8]   |  |
| MI17   |   | Secretariat for Director of Military Intelligence from April 1943.  |  |
| MI18   |   | (Not used)  |  |
| MI19   |   | Enemy prisoner of war interrogation (formed from MI9 in December 1941).   | Operated during the World War II era.                          |
| Others | MIR: Information on Russia, Siberia, Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, China, Japan, Siam and India  | MI (JIS): "Axis planning staff" related to Joint Intelligence Staff, a sub-group of the Joint Intelligence Committee.             |  |
|        |   | MI L: Attaches.   |  |
|        |   | MI L(R): Russian Liaison.   |  |

Table Source: Wikipedia



## When was writing 'invented'?

Source Quora.com

According to conventional archaeology, writing wasn't invented until 3000 to 4000 BC in Sumeria. But an artefact recovered in recent times, contradicts that belief. Or should we say, **may contradict** that belief.

### The Artifact



Picture Credit: "File:Dupyak Tablet Model.jpg" by Мико is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

The Dispilio Tablet (also known as the Dispilio Scripture or the Dispilio Disk) is a wooden tablet bearing inscribed markings (*charagmata*), unearthed during George Hourmouziadis's 1993 excavations at Dispilio in Northern Greece and carbon 14-dated to about 7300 BP (5260 BC). The tablet contained a set of symbols that seem to be a form or proto-writing, 2,000 years older than proto-Sumerian pictographic script from Uruk (modern Iraq) and 4,000 years older than the Cretan-Mycenean linear types of writing.

The **GreekReporter website** has this to say about the Tablet: 'According to the Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the markings [on the Tablet] suggested that the current theory proposing that the ancient Greeks received their alphabet from the ancient civilizations of the Middle East (Babylonians, Sumerians and Phoenicians etc) fails to close the historic gap of some 4,000 years. This gap translates into the following facts: while ancient eastern civilizations would use ideograms to express themselves, the ancient Greeks were using syllables in a similar manner like we use today. The currently accepted historic theory taught around the world suggests that the ancient Greeks learned to write around 800 BC from the Phoenicians. However, a question emerges among scholars: how is it possible for the Greek language to have 800,000-word entries, ranking first among all known languages in the world, while the second next has only 250,000-word entries? How is it possible for the Homeric Poems to have been produced at about 800 BC, which is just when the ancient Greeks learned to write? It would be impossible for the ancient Greeks to write these poetic works without having had a history of writing of at least 10,000 years back, according to a US linguistic research.'

### Make up your own mind

If you have any spare time, why not Google **Dispilio Tablet**? You can then make up your own mind about what the Tablet is, how old it is, and whether what's on it is actually 'writing' as such.

**See also** - The Secret History of Writing

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000mtml>

## The Inklings

The Inklings were an informal literary discussion group associated with C. S. Lewis at the University of Oxford for nearly two decades between the early 1930s and late 1949. The group were literary enthusiasts who praised the value of narrative in fiction and encouraged the writing of fantasy. As was typical for university literary groups in their time and place, the Inklings were all male, all British and all Christians. They often met at a pub called *The Eagle and Child* in St Giles', Oxford – it has a plaque inside which commemorates the writers' meetings at the premises.

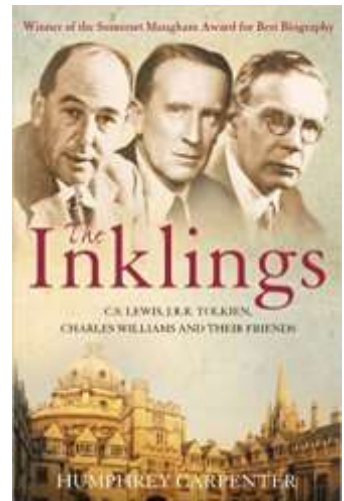
### More Information

There's a wealth of information about *The Inklings* on the website of The Mythopoeic Society - a national/international organisation promoting the study, discussion, and enjoyment of fantastic and mythopoeic literature through books and periodicals, annual conferences, discussion groups, awards, and more. The URL is: <http://www.mythsoc.org/inklings.htm>

### Recommended Reading

Humphrey Carpenter, a perceptive and highly respected English biographer, writer, and engaging radio broadcaster, is the author of a splendid book, titled (very appropriately) *The Inklings*. It's available at Amazon at:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lewis-Tolkien-charles-williams-Friends/dp/0007748698/>



## Getting the Bird



A man buys a parrot and brings him home. But the parrot is very rude and starts insulting him in a really nasty way, so the man picks up the parrot and tosses him into the freezer to teach him a lesson.

He hears the bird squawking for a few minutes, but suddenly, the parrot is quiet.

The man opens the freezer door, the parrot walks out, looks up at him and says, "I apologise wholeheartedly for offending you and being rude, and I humbly ask your forgiveness."

The man says, "Well, thank you. I forgive you."

The parrot then says, "By the way, if you don't mind my asking, what did the chicken do?"

## Piers of Sussex

Picture Credit: [Cropped] "Brighton Palace Pier" by jameswragg is licensed under CC BY 2.0



Piers of Sussex does not mean Piers Morgan, but you can look him up if you want at: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piers\\_Morgan](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piers_Morgan) - admittedly, his his name is Piers and he lives in East Sussex, (Newick) but Piers Morgan is an English broadcaster, journalist, writer, and television personality whereas this article is about the elegant structures that allow people to walk over water, well almost. Piers provide glamour and fun at the great British seaside and add a unique charm and nostalgia to our promenades and sea-fronts. The East Sussex coastline is fortunate enough to have three fine Victorian piers together with what remains of the wrecked West Pier in Brighton. In total there are 6 Sussex Piers which, in alphabetical order, are:

- Brighton Palace Pier
- Brighton West Pier (now wrecked)
- Eastbourne Pier
- Hastings Pier
- Littlehampton Pier
- Worthing Pier

The pier at Bognor is not listed above. Barely a tenth of its original length remains and it has suffered badly over the years. Nevertheless, it has a Grade II listing.

Although Sussex is probably the birthplace of the seaside pleasure pier, Ryde Pier on the Isle of Wight has the earliest origins as a pier. The dear departed and famous Chain Pier at Brighton was the first to be used as a fashionable promenade. Its full name was *The Royal Suspension Chain Pier* and it was the first major pier built in Brighton (1823), but was destroyed during a storm on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1896. From the 1860s until about 1910, a succession of piers were built along the Sussex coast from Littlehampton to Hastings. In their heyday they were the place to be seen. Magnus Volk, an inventor and pioneering electrical engineer, and a resident of Brighton, built a 'moving pier' affectionately known as the 'Daddy-long-legs'. He is most notable for having built Volk's Electric Railway, the world's oldest operating electric railway, on the Brighton seafront.

Here's a quick round-up of three of the Piers along our coast:

### Brighton Palace Pier

The Palace Pier opened in 1899 and was the third pier to be constructed in Brighton following *The Royal Suspension Chain Pier* and the *West Pier*. After opening, it quickly became popular, and by 1911 it had become a frequently visited theatre and entertainment venue. It has been featured in many works of British culture, including the gangster thriller *Brighton Rock*, the comedy *Carry On at Your Convenience* and the Who's concept album and film *Quadrophenia*. During World War II, the pier was closed as a security precaution. A section of decking was removed in order to prevent access from an enemy landing. The pier regained its popularity after the war, and continued to run regular summer shows, including Tommy Trinder, Doris and Elsie Waters and Dick Emery.

The pier was listed at Grade II on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1971.

### Worthing Pier

By 1894 a steam ship began operation between Worthing Pier and the Chain Pier in Brighton, twelve miles to the east. The first moving picture show in Worthing was seen on the pier on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1896 and is commemorated today by a blue plaque. In March 1913, on Easter Monday, the pier was damaged in a storm, with only the southern end remaining, completely cut off from land. Later, it was affectionately named 'Easter Island'. A rebuilt pier was opened on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1914. Then in September 1933 the pier and all but the northern pavilion were destroyed by fire. Two years later, the remodelled Streamline Moderne pier was opened, and it is this that remains today.

Worthing Pier was sectioned in 1940 for fear of German invasion after the British retreat at Dunkirk. Army engineers used explosives to blow a 120ft. hole in the pier to prevent it from being used as a possible landing stage in the event of an invasion. In 2006 and again in 2019, Worthing Pier was judged to be the Pier of the Year by the National Piers Society. It is a Grade II listed building structure.

### Eastbourne Pier

Eastbourne Pier, one of the finest examples of a Victorian pier, opened in 1872 and is a sought after film and TV location used in *Angus Thongs & Perfect Snogging*, and TV series including *Poirot*, *A Place in the Sun*, *Art Attack*, *Flog It*, and *BBC CCTV*.

On New Year's Day 1877, the landward half was swept away in a storm. It was rebuilt at a higher level, creating a drop towards the end of the pier. The pier is effectively built on stilts that rest in cups on the sea-bed allowing the whole structure to move during rough weather. It is roughly 300 metres (1000 ft) long. A domed 400-seater pavilion was constructed in 1888. A 1000-seater theatre, bar, camera obscura and office suite replaced this in 1899/1901. At the same time, two saloons were built midway along the pier. The camera obscura fell into disuse in the 1960s but was restored in 2003 with a new stairway built to provide access.

Paddle steamers (such as the *PS Brighton Queen* and the *PS Devonian*) ran trips from the pier along the south coast and across the Channel to Boulogne from 1906 until the outbreak of the Second World War II. Although they were resumed after the war, the paddle steamers were gradually withdrawn from service.

Various traditional pier theatres were built over the years but after the last one was destroyed by fire in 1970, it was replaced by a nightclub and bar which remain to this day. During World War II, part of the decking was removed, and machine guns were installed in the theatre providing a useful point from which to repel any attempted enemy landings.

### More Information

<https://sussexbloggers.com/east-sussex-piers/>

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Piers\\_in\\_Sussex](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Piers_in_Sussex)

Picture Credit: "What The Butler Saw" by the justified sinner is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



### What the Butler saw...

In earlier days, no self-respecting pier would be complete without a peep-show machine such as this. By depositing a penny coin (old money) in the slot, those who wanted to do so could view 'naughty' films. Tut Tut!

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

## This Little Piggy went to Market...

Picture Credit: "Piggy Wiggly" by ilovememphis is licensed



On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1916, *Piggly Wiggly* opened in Memphis, Tennessee USA. As you weren't there at the time, let me fill in some gaps for you.

It was the first true self-service grocery store the world had known. It spawned various familiar supermarket concepts such as checkout stands, individual item price marking and shopping carts. It was the brainchild of Clarence Saunders who took out a patent in 1917 on the concept of the "self-serving store". Saunders issued franchises to hundreds of grocery retailers for the operation of Piggly Wiggly® stores. These franchised stores were constructed to Saunders' rigid specifications, operated on a strictly cash basis, and maintained a high standard of quality and cleanliness.

From [www.thepig.net](http://www.thepig.net):

Piggly Wiggly's introduction of self-service grocery shopping revolutionised the grocery industry; many of the conveniences and services that American shoppers now enjoy were brought to them first by Piggly Wiggly®.

Saunders' reason for choosing the intriguing name Piggly Wiggly® remains a mystery; he was curiously reluctant to explain its origin. One story is that he saw from a train window several little pigs struggling to get under a fence, and the rhyming name occurred to him then. Another theory is that it is derived from the nursery rhyme, "This little piggy went to market..."

When asked why he had chosen such an unusual name for his organisation, Saunders' reply was, "So people will ask that very question." He wanted, and found, a name that would be talked about and remembered.

### Britain's Supermarkets

A little slow on the uptake, it took 32 years for Britain to follow Clarence Saunders' lead. The self-service supermarket came to Britain on 12th January 1948, when the London Co-operative Society opened a store in Manor Park, following a trial 6 years before. Co-op Food opened Britain's first fully self-service store in March 1948 in Albert Road, Southsea, near Portsmouth.

With the arrival of self-service came the 'stack 'em high, sell 'em cheap'\* approach to retail, and prices fell.

\* credited to Jack Cohen before he founded Tesco

Many of the shops that clung on to the old ways soon found themselves out of business. Premier Supermarkets lost no time in opening a self-service store in Streatham and sales rocketed. Marks & Spencer followed that same year in Wood Green.

### What's next?

*Mmuze* uses artificial intelligence (AI) to recreate the in-store shopping experience online, through a virtual personal shopping assistant. This enables customers to interact with a brand – via voice or text conversation – and tell them exactly what they are looking for. Whether they are searching for a specific dress or want advice on what to wear to a certain event, Mmuze "associates" answer every question that shoppers have, from price to style to material specifications. This prevents them from scrolling through hundreds of items online, making their experience more convenient and personal. They also offer customers personalised suggestions based on their purchase history and the latest trends.

GlobalData predicts that voice purchases will hit €45bn in the UK and US in 2022, and Adobe claims 90% of decision makers are investing in voice tech, according to Drapers:

<https://www.drapersonline.com/news/four-tech-innovations-pushing-retail-boundaries>

Other innovations identified by Drapers are:

- Customer engagement platform *Preciate* uses facial-recognition technology to help shop floor staff identify customers as they enter the store. It aims to help brands and retailers offer customers a unique, individualised experience through its tech-driven "loyalty programme". As an opt-in service, Preciate requires shoppers to enrol with a selfie, which can be taken via a mobile, laptop or in-store. The facial recognition algorithm then notifies staff as soon as shoppers enter the store and recognises them in real-time.
- Visual AI technology from computer software company *Syte* allows customers to search and shop for products by uploading an image to show what they are looking for, rather than textually describing it. By uploading an image to a retailer's website or app – be it from a brand campaign, random person on the street or magazine cutting – customers can browse and buy visually similar items that are currently in stock.
- Measurement technologies enable *MySizeID* to advise customers on their best size for every single item that they are looking at. Arguing that "customers shouldn't rely on varying size carts", MySize uses an algorithm to measure customers' precise body fit using their smartphone sensors, without the need for a camera (instructions on how to take images of each body part are included). You can see a video on this at:

<https://youtu.be/od64G7CjrIo>.

### (Famous) Last Words

Covid-19 has hastened the innovation in online retailing. I can't wait to see all the above happening. Then we can move onto the next big thing.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins



## Mystery of the SS Ourang Medan

Source: Story posted on Quora.com

*Did a mysterious tragedy occur on the SS Ourang Medan or is it all just a legend? Is it fact or fiction?*



In June 1947, several ships travelling trade routes in the strait of Malacca, off the coast of Malaysia, received a terrifying SOS message that read: "All officers including captain are dead lying in chart room and bridge. Possibly whole crew dead." After a short period of time, one final message was received, that read simply ... "I die."

Nearby ships identified the source of the signal as coming from a Dutch freighter, the SS Ourang Medan. The nearest merchant ship, The Silver Star, travelled as fast as they could to the source of the distress signal. On boarding the Ourang Medan, they were horrified to find every member of the crew dead, their corpses scattered over the decks. The eyes of the men were still open, and expressions of sheer terror were frozen on their faces. Even the ship's dog was dead, its once intimidating snarl frozen into a ghastly and ghostly grimace. The Silver Star's party found the deceased radio operator as well, his hand still on the Morse keys, and his eyes wide open, even in death.

But strangely, there were no signs of wounds or injuries on any of the bodies. The Silver Star's crew decided to tow the ship back to port, but before they could get underway, smoke began emanating from the decks below.

The boarding party quickly returned to their ship and barely had time to escape before the SS Ourang Medan exploded and swiftly sank. Some theorised that clouds of noxious natural gases bubbled up from fissures in the seabed and engulfed the ship, and others have even blamed the occurrence on the supernatural, but to this day, the exact fate of the ship's crew remains a mystery.

Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ourang\\_Medan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ourang_Medan)) casts some doubt on some of the forgoing. It says the SS Ourang Medan became a shipwreck in Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) waters, or elsewhere, after its entire crew had died under suspicious circumstances, either in 1940, 1947 or 1948, depending on the newspaper source. The story of the Ourang Medan has, to some degree, become a legend.

A survivor, before perishing himself, told a missionary that the ship was carrying a badly stowed cargo of sulphuric acid, and that most of the crew perished because of the poisonous fumes escaping from broken containers.

According to his story, the SS Ourang Medan was sailing from an unnamed small Chinese port to Costa Rica, and deliberately avoided the authorities. The survivor, an unnamed German, died after telling his story to the missionary, who told the story to the author, Silvio Scherli of Trieste, Italy.

There are many theories as to what actually happened. It was suggested the ship might have been involved in smuggling operations of chemical substances such as a combination of potassium cyanide and nitro-glycerine or even wartime stocks of nerve agents. According to these theories, sea water would have entered the ship's hold, reacting with the cargo to release toxic gases, which then caused the crew to succumb to asphyxia and/or poisoning. Later, the sea water would have reacted with the nitro-glycerine, causing the reported fire and explosion.

Another theory is that the ship was transporting nerve gas which the Japanese military had been storing in China during World War II and which was handed over to the US military at the end of the war. No US ship could transport it as it would leave a paper trail. It was therefore loaded onto a non-registered ship for transport to the US or an island in the Pacific.

### In Conclusion

At the end of an article at

<https://www.historicmysteries.com/ourang-medan/>, Les Hewitt asks:

*Was the tragedy on the SS Ourang Medan a genuine event or just a mariner's seafaring tale designed to scare, frighten, or dissuade?*

Author James Donahue at

<https://www.perdurabo10.net/ourang-medan.html#> wrote that Naval historian Roy Bainton conducted exhaustive research on this "death ship" story. After turning to Lloyd's Shipping registers, the Dutch Shipping records and even places like the Maritime Authority in Singapore, he was about to conclude that the Ourang Medan story was nothing more than an old sailor's yarn. Then Bainton found a German booklet titled "Death Ship in the South Sea" by Otto Mielke, that gave details about the SS Ourang Medan, its route, cargo, tonnage and even the name of the captain. Bainton wrote that Mielke's booklet suggested that the Number 4 hold of the fated ship was filled with "a mixed, lethal cargo on the Dutchman 'Zyankali' (potassium cyanide) and nitro-glycerine.

Contributed by



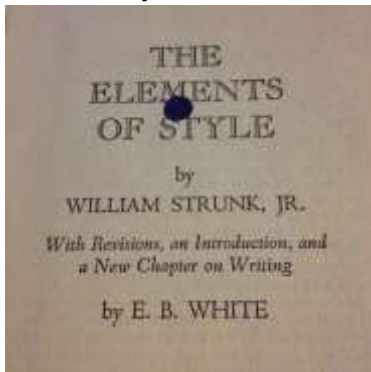
Martin Pollins

Your guess as to what really happened is probably as good as mine. Perhaps better. What do you think? Was there a conspiracy at play? Something to do with the end of the war? It's odd that there doesn't seem to be any official records that the ship ever existed in the first place, yet the Silver Star found it...

## Writing: Style and Purpose

### 'Elements of Style'

Picture Credit: "The Elements of Style" by Patrick Johansson is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



In modern times, the original book on writing style, *Elements of Style*, was written in 1918 by Professor William Strunk, Jr., for use by his students at Cornell University, USA. His strategy was to edit down the

complexities of English grammar into just those few basic elements which would help people to improve their writing skills. His central rule was to keep everything as simple as possible (he said 'omit needless words'). For instance, he kicks off immediately with the apostrophe, the comma, and other points of punctuation which create the most common problems. Only when he has cleared these out of the way does he get down to what he calls the 'Elementary Principles of Composition'.

Although Strunk's book is a masterpiece, it should be remembered that it was written in America more than ten decades ago. Thus, there are some differences in spelling and style from that generally used in the UK. The book text is considered to be in the public domain, meaning that it is not subject to copyright.

Please email me at [mpollins@bizezia.com](mailto:mpollins@bizezia.com) if you would like a free copy of the PDF of this groundbreaking book.

### 'The Origin and Progress of Writing, as well Hieroglyphic as Elementary'

Picture Credit: Screenprint of Digital Book



Palaeography is the study of ancient and historical handwriting (that is to say, of the forms and processes of writing; not the textual content of documents).

Included in the discipline is the practice of deciphering, reading, and dating historical manuscripts, and the cultural context of writing, including the methods with which

writing, and books were produced, and the history of scriptoria. The first major English work of palaeography is considered to be *The Origin and Progress of Writing, as well hieroglyphic as elementary* by Thomas Astle. It was published in London in 1784, printed for the author and sold by T. Payne and son [etc.]. The author was, by all accounts, *Keeper of the Records in the Tower of London*.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

The original book was illustrated by Engravings taken from Marbles, Manuscripts and Charters - Ancient and Modern. It also provided some account of the Origin and Progress of Printing. There have been several reprints since 1784 but the closest most people will get to the book is a page-turning digital archive copy which is available online at:

[https://archive.org/details/originprogressof00astl\\_0/page/110/mod e/2up](https://archive.org/details/originprogressof00astl_0/page/110/mod e/2up)

### 'A History of Punctuation'

Florence Hazrat is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the School of English at the University of Sheffield, working on parentheses in Renaissance romance. Her first book *Refrains in Early Modern Literature* is forthcoming, and she is currently writing a book called *Standing on Points: The History and Culture of Punctuation*. She is well qualified in being able to write about punctuation and an essay she wrote on Aeon caught my eye. Please read it at: <https://aeon.co/essays/beside-the-point-punctuation-is-dead-long-live-punctuation>. The title of the essay is 'A History of Punctuation: How we came to represent (through inky marks) the vagaries of the mind, inflections of the voice, and intensity of feeling'.

Ms Hazrat, who describes herself as "an academic and writer, swordswoman, folk fiddler, and radical ecologist with a side-interest in the history of hyenas" writes (an extract from her essay):

*"One of the primary purposes of writing in Ancient Greece and Rome was giving lectures and political speeches, not publishing texts. Before going on stage, an orator would work on his text, making subjective, individually determined signs for long and short syllables, pauses for rhetorical effect and breathing, and joining up of words when reading aloud. There was no such thing as reading at first sight.*

*"Writing without punctuation lasted for many hundreds of years, in spite of individual efforts such as those of Aristophanes, the librarian at Alexandria. Around 200 BCE, Aristophanes of Alexandria wished to ease pronunciation of Greek for foreigners by suggesting small circles at different levels of the line for pauses of different lengths, emphasising the rhythm of the sentence though not yet its grammatical shape. That would remain a task for the 7th-century churchman and encyclopaedist Isidore of Seville.*

*"Isidore invented the period, comma and colon. He rethought Aristophanes' punctuation, based on pauses when reading aloud, in terms of grammatical parts of the sentence: an utterance whose sense and grammar were complete would receive a dot at the top of the line, which would eventually migrate down to the bottom and become the full stop or period we know today. An utterance whose sense and grammar were complete but accommodated expansion would get a dot in the centre: the future colon. Lastly, an utterance that was neither complete in sense nor in grammar would be marked off with a dot at the bottom, evolving into the comma. Where previously only the full sentence received a boundary sign, it was now also possible to distinguish the constituents within. Isidore's ideas circulated widely and, by the end of the same century, Irish monks had added spaces between words to his system of dots. These changes attest to a shift in the perception of writing from record of speech to record of information. Meaning no longer needed to pass from eye to mind via voice and ear, but was directly – silently – apprehended."*

### Report from the Mid-Sussex Times, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 1940 (page 6)

HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB.  
PRESENTATION OF SUSSEX JUNIOR  
CUP MEDALS.

Members of the Hassocks Football Club spent a pleasant evening at the Greyhound Inn, Keymer last Tuesday, when they were presented with Sussex Junior Cup finalists medals. The team, after beating Lindfield, Crawley, Allen West and Jarvis Brook in the preliminary rounds, were beaten 5-0 in the final by Worthing.

It was the Club's first appearance in the final, and the medals to commemorate the occasion were the gift of Mr. C. Schultz, the Sussex County Football Association having decided, as a war-time economy measure, not to award medals out of their funds.

Distributing the medals, Mr. Shultz congratulated the players on reaching the final and complimented them on their excellent team spirit and sportsmanship. He feared that the war would prevent any football next season but hoped the very near future would see them once again on the field of play. The recipients of the medals, which are of silver and bear the Sussex County crest in blue and yellow enamel, were H. Knight (captain), C.E. Grinsted, J.A. Browne, B.J. Hoad, R.C. Price, G.S. Cragg, H.W. Whitbourn, W. Wright, B.P. McGrath, S.N. James, H.F. Cove and B. Fletcher.

Mr. E.E. Seal a member of the Club Committee, warmly thanked Mr. Shultz for his generosity and for the interest he had always shown in the welfare of the Club. (Applause).

He also thanked the players for rallying the support the Club during a season of great difficulties. They were all sorry the Sussex Junior Cup was not gracing

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

the table that evening, but they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had put up a splendid show and were beaten not only by a better team but a team of grand sportsmen. (Applause). He wished them the best luck in the future, and hoped the time was not far distant when they would be playing together again.

The thanks of the players to Mr. Shultz were voiced by Mr. H. Knight who also thanked the members of the team for the way they had supported him as Captain. In spite of the war the season had been a thoroughly enjoyable one, and that was due to the splendid team spirit which prevailed throughout. Mr. R. Price proposed the health of Mr. Shultz, whom he described as one of the finest sportsmen Hassocks had ever known. (Applause). The toast was accorded musical honours.

#### Comment by Martin Pollins

It may be hard for some to believe it but, in my heyday, I played for Hassocks Football Club – hence my interest in sharing this story. I was able to access the story via my subscription to British Newspapers Archive (an excellent resource with access to nearly 40 million newspaper pages).

I recognise the names of some of the team that represented Hassocks in the Sussex Junior Cup Final – Mr Schultz was still around (as President or Chairman of the Club) during my playing years.

Mr Grinsted was (I think) the brother of the grocer whose shop adjoined the Greyhound Inn in Keymer. Mr Price, Mr Cragg and Mr Cove were fathers of my contemporaries. Barney Fletcher I knew well. Ernie Seal was responsible in my day for preparing the leather match and practice balls and the occasional concussion suffered by players who foolishly ventured to head the incredibly heavy balls, particularly if they were wet – whereupon the balls became as heavy as concrete.



#### How has covid-19 boosted innovation?

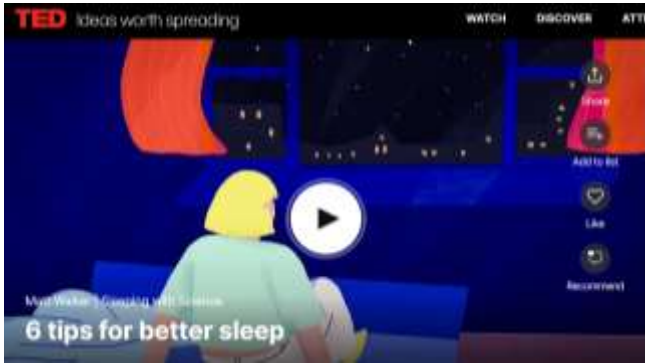
In March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the covid-19 outbreak to be a pandemic – something much worse than an epidemic. The data team at *The Economist* has been closely following the course of the disease and its toll from the start, producing a range of trackers and interactive charts to keep us informed about how covid-19 has spread, how many people have died (and where) and how well vaccination programmes are faring worldwide.

Crucially, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technologies and pushed the world faster into the future. As we all look towards life after covid, what lessons can be learned about innovation?

See the video: **How has covid-19 boosted innovation** - click [here](#).



### Sleeping with Science



Do you want to not only fall asleep quickly but also stay asleep longer?

Sleep scientist Matt Walker explains how your room temperature, lighting and other easy-to-fix factors can set the stage for a better night's rest.

For tips on sleeping better, go to:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/matt\\_walker\\_6\\_tips\\_for\\_better\\_sleep](https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_walker_6_tips_for_better_sleep)

Picture Credits: The pictures above are screen shots of the TED videos.

### Want a better keyboard?

If you use an iPhone, perhaps you hanker for a better keyboard. There are plenty that are now available.

Gboard is the keyboard from Google for your iPhone, packed with features to make typing effortless. On top of GIFs, emoji search, and Glide Typing, the power of Google is at your fingertips with Google Search built in. Forget switching from app to app – just search and send, all from one place. Details from

<https://bit.ly/359S9sU>

### Eh? What? Pardon?



**A conversation at the Audiologists...**

"So So, Mr. Brandberg, are you happy with your new hearing aid?"

"Very much so. Thank you. I already changed my last will twice!"

**Source (don't copy without it):** <https://short-funny.com/senior-jokes.php>

Picture Credit: "hearing aid close-up" by Photos by Portland\_Mike is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

### Bob's Mistake

Bob forgot his wedding anniversary. His wife was mad. She told him "Tomorrow morning, I expect to find a gift in the driveway that goes from 0 to 200 in 6 seconds AND IT BETTER BE THERE!!!" The next morning when his wife woke up, she looked out the window to find a box... gift-wrapped in the middle of the driveway. She opened it and found a brand new bathroom scale. . . Bob has been missing since Friday!

### Henry Ford on Life

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young."

"Whether You Think You can or Think You Can't, You're Right"

"There's just one thing that's permanent in this world, and that's change. And when a man gets too old to change, why, then, he dies. And after that, who knows?"

"Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."

"Don't find fault, find a remedy; anybody can complain."

### Henry Ford



Picture Credit: "Henry Ford with 1921 Model T" by Cea, is licensed under CC BY 2.0

## 'Waltzing Matilda' translated into English

Source: <https://www.quora.com/Can-anyone-translate-all-the-Australian-slang-in-the-song-Waltzing-Matilda/answer/Nicholas-Valentine>

Picture Credit: "Waltzing Matilda" by Leonard J Matthews is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Nicholas Valentine on Quora, at the hyperlink above, does an excellent job of explaining the meaning of the unusual (at least to Brits) terms in Australia's best-known bush ballad, often described as the country's "unofficial national anthem" – *Waltzing Matilda*. The original lyrics were written in 1895 by Australian poet Banjo Paterson, and were first published as sheet music in 1903.

This is how it goes and what it means:

*Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong  
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,  
He sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled<sup>SEP</sup>  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me*

A Swagman is an itinerant labourer who travelled by foot from farm to farm carrying all his belongings in a swag (bedroll). He sets up his camp by a billabong which is an oxbow lake, an isolated pond left behind after a river changes course. He sits in the shade of a large Eucalyptus, a Coolibah tree. He makes himself a cup of tea and waits for the water to boil in his "Billy", which is an Australian term for a metal container, usually with a simple wire handle, used for boiling water, making tea or cooking over a fire.

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me  
He sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,  
you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.*

The refrain *You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me* refers to the Swagman travelling with his swag (Matilda).

*Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,  
he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag,  
you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me*

So a jumbuck is a sheep and it comes down to the billabong to drink. The Swagman grabs the sheep and stows him in his tuckerbag. Which is a bag where you keep your tucker (food) of course! Intending to steal him.

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me  
He sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag  
you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me*

*Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred,  
Up rode the troopers, one, two, three,  
Whats the jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.*

A squatter (land-owner) turns up on his expensive horse with three soldiers. He asks the swaggy what he has in his tuckerbag, suspecting him of sheep rustling. Tells the swaggy that he anticipates waltzing his arse (sorry, but you know what Australians are like) right off to jail.

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me  
With the jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, you scoundrel with me.  
Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong,  
You'll never catch me alive, said he,  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.*

Declaring "you'll never take me alive" the swaggy tries to escape by swimming the billabong but drowns in the attempt, however his ghost remains to sing the song.

*Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.  
Oh, you'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me.*

And that is it. Probably the most famous Australian Bush Ballad. Except for the term Swagman and the title *Waltzing Matilda*, most of the other terms here are still in current usage in Australia: Swag, Billy, Billabong, Tuckerbag, Troopers no longer maintain law and order as there is now a civilian police force of course. Also, Jumbuck is probably not in common usage anymore.

### Dame Edna says...



*"My mum used to say that there are no strangers, only friends you haven't met yet. Mum's now in a maximum-security Twilight home in Australia."*

*"My show is like an intimate conversation between two friends, one of whom is a lot more interesting than the other."*

Picture Credit: "Dame Edna Everage" by James Cridland is licensed under CC BY 2.0

## The lost painting of Leonardo da Vinci



Picture Credit: "Leonardo da Vinci self-portrait, Chambord Castle, Loire Valley, France - The metallic stone effect is generated by computer" by MAMJODH is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Nish Jayram, writing a post (*The lost painting of Leonardo da Vinci*) on Quora at <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-greatest-mysteries-in-art-history/answer/Nish-Jayram> describes the circumstances that led to one of the greatest mysteries in the history of art.

### What happened?

On June 29, 1440, the Florence-led Italian League defeated a numerically superior Milanese force at Anghiari, near Tuscany. Though the casualties were light on both sides, this victory enabled Florence to establish its dominance in central Italy. This would contribute to the rise of the great Medici family, providing some of the most influential figures in the Italian Renaissance.

In 1504, almost a century after the battle, the Florentine government approached one of the greatest Renaissance artists with a commission: paint a depiction of Anghiari on a wall of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's city hall. This artist was none other than Leonardo da Vinci. At the time, it was common for wall murals to be painted using the fresco technique.

Frescoes involve laying dry pigment against wet, freshly laid plaster, essentially fusing the painting with the wall. However, the problem is that the plaster dries quickly, and so any mistakes made with such a painting cannot be easily revised.

Leonardo, ever the innovator, devised of an alternative: he would attempt the mural with oil paints, using beeswax to get them to stick. Ideally, this would give him more control over the rate at which the paint dried. Initially, the plan seemed successful. But the painter now faced the opposite problem of what he was trying to avoid: now the paints were drying too slowly, causing them to drip and run. So, the painter decided to use charcoal stoves to try and accelerate the process. Again, the master's ingenuity showed: the stoves were hooked up through an ingenious pulley system, allowing workers to distribute heat throughout the wall by pulling on a series of ropes.

### What heat does to beeswax

Unfortunately, da Vinci had failed to account for one thing: the beeswax, which with the sudden increase in heat, began to melt, irrevocably ruining his work. Unsurprisingly, he was devastated. Discouraged, he abandoned the project and never returned to it.

The Florentinians had expected a grandiose depiction of their great victory covering the entire wall. But what they were left with was a small depiction of just a few soldiers on horseback, engaged in ferocious combat for a battle standard.

Yet, despite its runny and incomplete appearance, Leonardo da Vinci's *'The Battle of Anghiari'* (1505) was instantly recognised as a brilliant piece.

So why don't we hear more about this famed painting? And why aren't there people flocking to see it in all its glory? Well, the sad truth is that it has gone.

Nish Jayram explains that during the 1560s, the Palazzo de Vecchio was remodelled by the architect Giorgio Vasari, who also painted new frescoes of his own creation on the walls.

It is believed that these renovations are what ultimately destroyed Leonardo da Vinci's painting. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the mural still lies somewhere, hidden from view.

The art historian Carlo Pedretti noted that Vasari was known to have preserved existing art in previous renovations; it would not be beyond reason that he would have done the same with the Palazzo.

### Leonardo da Vinci's lost masterpieces

The Renaissance man was as much a scientist as an artist. On the 500th anniversary of his death, Cath Pound in an article dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, explores how Leonardo da Vinci's drawings reveal his genius. She says of the great man:

*'Leonardo da Vinci is considered one of the most diversely talented individuals who ever lived and yet we have scant physical evidence of his genius. He created some of the greatest paintings of the Renaissance – but fewer than 20 survive with many, like The Last Supper or Salvator Mundi, so heavily restored that the hand of the master is scarcely visible. No sculptural or architectural project was ever completed and the many treatises he planned, including those on art and anatomy, remained unfinished.'*

Cath Pound's article is worth reading - it's at:

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20190501-leonardo-da-vincis-lost-masterpieces> and adds 'colour' to Nish Jayram's post.

## Easter this year

This year, Easter Sunday is on 4th April 2021.

The little girl in this video has some interesting questions. Tune in [here](#) and listen to what she has to say.





## Sir Billy and the company he built

On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021, members, wives, widows, and friends of Haywards Heath & District Probus Club were treated to an excellent Zoom talk about the late Sir Billy Butlin and the company he founded. The speaker was the historian Dr Kathryn Ferry, who has a passionate interest in architecture, design and seaside culture. She is an author of several books and articles and regularly contributes to television and radio. She also lectures to a wide range of audiences. Her website is at: <https://www.kathrynferry.co.uk/>.

### About Sir Billy Butlin...

Sources: • [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy\\_Butlin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Butlin) • <https://www.butlins.com/about-us>  
• <https://bognorregistrails.co.uk/history-pages/sir-w-e-billy-butlin/>  
• <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butlins> • [https://www.bigredbook.info/billy\\_butlin.html](https://www.bigredbook.info/billy_butlin.html)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_Ocean,\\_Saltdean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Ocean,_Saltdean) • <http://traquo.com/the-grand-ocean-hotel-saltdean-near-brighton/> • [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butlins\\_Bognor\\_Regis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butlins_Bognor_Regis)

Billy Butlin (in full, Sir William Heygate Edmund Colborne Butlin MBE) was a South African-born British entrepreneur whose name is synonymous with the British holiday camp. But he was not the first: Amongst the first public campsites, *The Cunningham Camp* (see [here](#)), later *Cunningham Young Men's Holiday Camp*, opened on the Isle of Man in 1894. Billy Butlin was still in short trousers when Fletcher Dodd launched his 'Socialist Camp' in 1906, in Great Yarmouth with three bell tents pitched in his garden. Inspired by utopian ideas, Fletcher Dodd, a member of the Independent Labour Party, saw in his model camp a means of offering the poor of Britain a chance to sample the delights of a seaside holiday. And Warner's already existed in one form or another before Billy Butlin opened his first camp in 1936. It was Butlin who turned holiday camps into a multimillion-pound industry and an important aspect of British culture.

Butlin was born in Cape Town and had a turbulent childhood. His parents separated before he was seven, and he returned to England with his mother. He spent the next five years following his grandmother's family fair around the country where his mother sold gingerbread; exposing young Billy to the skills of commerce and entertainment. When he was twelve his mother emigrated to Canada, leaving him in the care of his aunt for two years. Once settled in Toronto, his mother invited him to join her there. After the First World War (he was a bugler in the Canadian Army), Billy returned to England (aboard a cattle ship, no less), with only £5 in his pocket. Investing £4 of that money to hire a stall travelling with his uncle's fair, he discovered that giving his customers a better chance to win brought more custom in. He quickly became successful and started his own travelling fair.

An advertisement costing £500 (today c £35,000) was placed in the *Daily Express*, announced the opening of his first holiday camp (Skegness), inviting the public to book for a week's holiday. The advertisement offered holidays with three meals a day and free entertainment with a week's full board cost anything from 35 shillings (old money) to £3 (today c £213). When the camp opened, Butlin realised that his guests were not engaging with activities in the way he had planned. Most kept to themselves, and others looked bored. An engineer engaged on constructing the camp (by the name of Norman Bradford) was asked to entertain the guests, which he did with a series of ice breakers and jokes. By the end of the night, the camp came alive, and the Butlin's atmosphere was born. Bradford became the first of the long line of Redcoats.

Butlin actively engaged in charity work through the *Grand Order of Water Rats* and through the *Variety Club of Great Britain*. He was *Chief Barker of the Variety Club* in 1959, 1966 and 1975.

### Timeline for Butlins

Between 1936 and 1966, ten camps were built, including one in Ireland and one in the Bahamas. In the 1970s and 1980s, Butlin's also operated numerous large hotels, including one in Spain, several smaller holiday parks in England and France, and a revolving restaurant in the Post Office Tower in London. But tough competition from overseas package holiday operators, rising operational costs, and rapidly changing demand, forced many of the Butlin's operations to close in the 1980s and 1990s.

Three of the original camps remain under the Butlins brand in Bognor Regis, Minehead, and Skegness. They are now owned and run by Butlins Skyline Ltd, a subsidiary company of Bourne Leisure Ltd, which also operates other leisure brands such as Warner Leisure and Haven Holidays.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butlins>

### Decade-by-Decade

- 1930s: Skegness opened in April 1936 and doubled in size in just 12 months. It was officially opened by Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. Clacton-on-Sea became the second camp in 1938.
- 1940s: To help with the war efforts, Billy's existing camps were given over to the government.
- 1950s: Indoor heated pools designed to be used 'whatever the weather' opened at Ayr, Clacton, Pwllheli and Skegness. After holidaying in the Caribbean, Billy opened Butlin's Bahamas.
- 1960s: A further three resorts opened: Bognor Regis (1960), Minehead (1962) and Barry Island (1966).
- 1970s: with air travel to foreign destinations becoming accessible to everyone and as people fell in love with holidaying abroad, the concept of 'holiday camps' faded. The business was sold to the Rank Organisation.
- 1980s and 1990s: Billy Butlin passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1980. His funeral procession was lined with Redcoats. Many sites were closed or sold off.

Source: <https://www.butlins.com/about-us/our-timeline>

### Connections with Sussex

The coronavirus lockdowns caused closure off and on from early 2020 but the update on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 announced that Resorts would reopen on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Butlin's presence in the seaside resort of *Bognor Regis*, began in 1932 with the opening of an amusement park and soon expanded to take in a zoo as well. In 1960, Billy Butlin opened his first post-war mainland holiday camp, moving both the amusement park and zoo into the new camp. The camp survived a series of cuts in the early 1980s, attracting further investment and again in the late 1990s when it was retained as one of only three camps still bearing the Butlin name.

The Ocean Hotel at *Saltdean* occupied a site of around 4 acres with 344 bedrooms and a dining hall that could seat 300 people. The iconic hotel was designed by architect RWH Jones in the classic moderne styling of the age (he also designed the Lido at Saltdean). The Ocean Hotel opened as a luxury hotel in 1938. During World War II, the building was taken over by the fire service and used as a fire service college. It was then bought by Billy Butlin in 1953 and became a Butlin's Holiday camp. In 2005/6, the main hotel building was redeveloped into luxury apartments. The hotel became the *Grand Metropolitan* for a TV film as the famous (fictional) Belgian detective Hercules Poirot staying there on vacation to boost his health, had to use all his skills when the pearl necklace of a theatre actress who was staying at the hotel, was mysteriously stolen, see [here](#).



Picture Credit:  
"File:Grand Ocean Hotel, Saltdean-8279764869.jpg" by Chris Sampson is licensed under CC BY 2.0

### VIDEOS TO WATCH

- <https://youtu.be/BUFAjYIM8G4>
- <https://www.huntleyarchives.com/results.asp?searchtxtkeys=Butlins>

## Recollections of a time long ago...

Picture Credit: "66-1110-01 - Cliff Richard - The Shadows - 'Thunderbirds Are Go' - Record Mail 9-11 (November 1966)" by Bradford Timeline is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

**RECORD MAIL**

A MONTHLY REVIEW AND DETAILS OF THE LATEST  
'POPULAR' RECORDS ISSUED BY E.M.I RECORDS  
H.M.V., Capitol, Columbia, Parlophone, Encore, Stateside,  
M-G-M, Liberty, United Artists, Verve, Tamla Motown

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# THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

1<sup>d.</sup>

IT can't be—it must be—it is!  
Cliff and The Shadows have  
been puppetised for a new film—  
"Thunderbirds Are Go!" They  
have recorded an EP of four num-  
bers from the film on Columbia  
SEG8510.