

COUNTESTHORPE U3A

UPDATE AND CURFEW CHRONICLE No 15

Dear Member

First of all – a very Happy Easter to you all. Not much scope for Easter Egg Hunts, or Easter Bonnet Parades, but we can dream about 2022, I guess!

As usual, my thanks to all the contributors! I hope you will enjoy the selection for this month. Please do keep them coming in, as I think there will still be a few more issues of the Chronicle to come!

As I said last month, your committee will be considering the impact of the 'roadmap' as it unfolds and then liaising with our various venues and also with those of you who are Group Leaders, to try and plan for resuming our U3A activities. This will obviously be a gradual process, reliant on external factors way beyond our control!

Good wishes to you all.

June Hawkins

Information and Publicity Officer

*Chronicle contributions not later than 26 April, please,
to me by email at: jhawkins45@talktalk.net
or by post to 28 Mulberry Court, Enderby Rd, Blaby. LE8 4BU*



IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Please note that renewals ARE NOW DUE!

- The cost is **only £5** (full and associate members) for 2021/22
- No form is required, just send (with your name and membership number if known – see previous membership card) to Barry Hillyard at
- 35 Station Road, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5TA.
- All new or lapsed (*check with Barry if you're unsure!*) members will need to complete the usual form and pay the full price of £15 (£8 for Associate).
- Forms are available to download from the website, or contact Barry on 0116 277 4187 or barry@bhillyard.plus.com
- **Cheques** are preferred, please, payable to “Countesthorpe U3A”.
- **PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH UNLESS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL!**
- **Bank transfers** can be accepted for membership payments ONLY:
A/c: The Countesthorpe U3A Sort Code: 40-12-35 A/c No: 01402889 Ref: Your 3-digit **membership number** + **surname**, or as much of it as can be entered in the available space. (*If you can't find your membership number from a previous membership card then please call Barry on 277 4187 or June on 277 6330*)
- Please note that membership cards will no longer be issued.
- Programme cards will be made available to all members once our main meeting activities resume and we have details of speakers/dates/topics.

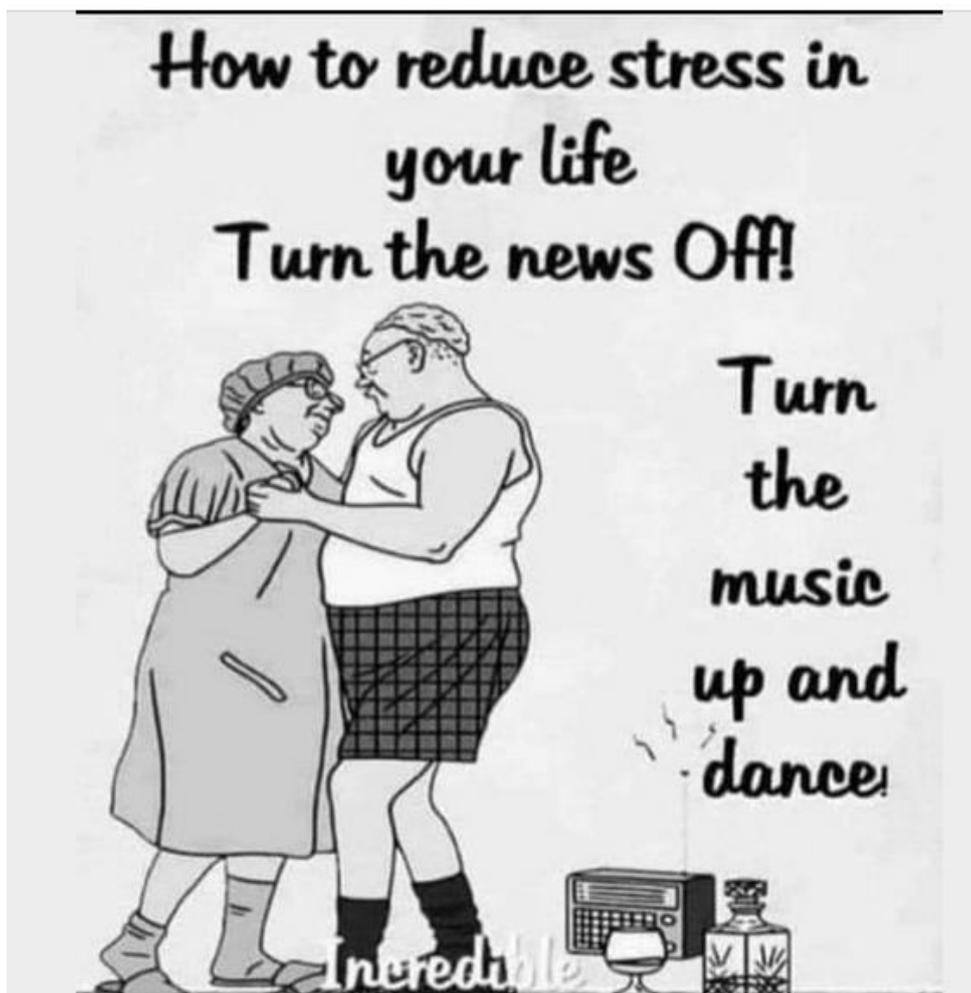
PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RENEWALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! THANK YOU.

**KYNREN HOLIDAY
12-16 August 2021**

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SINGLE ROOMS ARE NOW TAKEN BUT A FEW TWIN ROOMS ARE STILL AVAILABLE. Call Jill on 277 7154.

RESTARTING OUR U3A

- All information is subject to change resulting from government announcements and revisions to venue regulations
- It is planned to hold our AGM on Tuesday, 10 August 2021
- This may be the usual format in the Village Hall, OR perhaps at an alternative venue OR via Zoom – depending on the situation
- We will be consulting with venues and Group Leaders about recommencing specific groups – depending on the activity, the venue and the estimated number of attendees
- As things currently stand, we MAY be in a position to restart Nordic Walking, CARE Walking and SWANS after 12 April – subject to restrictions; details will be notified later.



Sent in by Ian Paterson

And here is the final part of Stewart Fergusson's . . .

VISIT TO JORDAN: CROSSROADS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The final strand of our exploration of Jordan's rich history was a visit to the Roman city of Jerash. At Petra and Madaba we had been introduced to the importance to Rome of this frontier region of Transjordan, the Roman Province of *Arabia Petraea* east of the River Jordan. At Jerash we were able to immerse ourselves in the important influence of Rome and its Byzantine offspring. Western Europeans tend to have a popular view of the Roman Empire that focuses on its expansion in France, the Rhineland and barbarian Britain. We are fixated on the battles in the forests of Germany, depicted in the film *Gladiator*, the clash with the Gauls immortalised by Julius Caesar in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* beloved of English Latin teachers and more amusingly the French comic figure Asterix the Gaul; and the modest Roman towns and settlements of England protected by Hadrian's Wall immortalised in Rosemary Sutcliff's story of *The Eagle of the Ninth* and its recent adaptation in the film *The Eagle*. But the Romans were more interested in the fertile Nile, their breadbasket, the olive groves of Spain, a part of the Empire that sired more than one Emperor, all things Greek and the rich trading centres of the Middle East. In the Middle East it was the Hellenic settlements of the *Decapolis* that loomed large in their attention. So named by Pliny the Elder, these were ten semi-autonomous city states on the Empire's eastern frontier where Greek and Roman culture interacted with the Semitic and Aramaic culture of the Nabateans, Judeans and Arameans. The ten large and prosperous cities were located in modern Syria, Israel and, mostly, Jordan and included modern Damascus, Umm Quais, Amman - then known as the Alexandrian city of Philadelphia - and at its nodal point, Jerash.

The name Jerash tells us much about the intersection of Greco-Roman and Semitic culture in this part of the Roman Empire. Originally a Semitic name, Garshu, it was Romanized as Gerasa and is now the Arabic Jerash. Jerash has some fine examples of typical public buildings common to substantial Roman cities. There is a monumental arch commemorating the visit of Hadrian. Hadrian gives his name to the stark back wall of his empire in the cold lands of northern Europe designed to keep out unsavoury neighbours, but the grand entrance welcoming the rich caravans of the east are marked by great arches named in his honour of which the one in Jerash is a fine example. There are two recently restored Roman theatres and a well-preserved Hippodrome and stables that hosts modern re-enactments of chariot races and Roman military manoeuvres. From the pedimented south gate you enter a grand paved oval plaza enclosed by two curving colonnades. Leading off this plaza is a long arrow-straight colonnaded *Corda* flanked by the remains of a more modest *Macellum* or food market, temples to Greco-Roman gods, some re-purposed as Byzantine churches, a *Nymphaeum*, a *Propylaeum* which is an ornately decorated gateway with a flight of steps leading up to a sacred courtyard, and public baths. The full stop to the *Corda* is another pedimented gateway. In other parts of the site are the remains of Byzantine churches, Umayyad mosques and a synagogue. Jerash has clearly been home to all the great faiths as well as the polytheism of Greece and Rome.



It is one of the largest and best-preserved ancient Roman cities outside Italy and this is the point about Jerash. It is not that it offers some unique examples of individual Roman buildings, but what is unusual about Jerash is the fact that these remains are altogether in a well laid out Roman town. Like Pompeii and Ephesus you are witness to how a Roman town of the first century BCE and CE looked and felt and you can imagine the life of this bustling city. Jenny and I scanned the whole town from the high point of the Temple of Zeus. In the hot afternoon sun Jenny sat in the shade of the pillars encircling the oval plaza in easy conversation with some of our companions, just as its original citizens would have done. Meanwhile I wandered down the *Corda*, occasionally branching off to explore the ruins of the Temple of Artemis, the baths or the *Macellum*. In my mind's eye it was easy to imagine traders and caravans passing through the great gates after long dusty journeys along the Kings Highway; carts guided and rumbling along in the ruts in the stone paving of the *Corda*; food vendors in the *Macellum* selling all kinds of produce including the ubiquitous gallum, that all-purpose pungent fish source that was a staple of Greek, Roman and Arabic cuisine; processions wending their way to the temples; guards on the gates; noisy argumentative meetings on town business held in one of the theatres; the noise of crowds cheering the charioteers; and the leisurely crowds wandering and passing time in the shade of the colonnaded plaza.

Jerash brought our fascinating trip to an end. We returned to our Dead Sea hotel, resisted the temptation to go floating - it was much too hot - and packed for the return to the UK. As we flew home I reflected on this surprising trip. Having come with a rather simple view of this apparently artificial state carelessly drawn by the old Imperial powers of Britain and France after World War I, I left with a much more appreciative understanding of Jordan's rich heritage and distinctive culture. Modern Jordan is an attractive and confident polity proud of its mixed heritage going back thousands of years, and in these uncertain and volatile times, especially in the Middle East, welcoming of visitors to a safe place to visit.



THINKING OF BOOKING SUMMER HOLIDAYS ABROAD?



I'M ON A COMMITTEE

Oh give me your pity; I'm on a committee
Which means that from morning to night
We attend and amend and contend and defend,
Without a conclusion in sight!

We confer and concur; we defer and demur;
We reiterate all of our thoughts.
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda
And consider a load of reports.

We compose and propose; we suppose and appose
And the points of procedure are fun.
But though various notions are brought up as motions
There's terribly little gets done.

We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve
Since it's out of the question for us.
What a shattering pity to end our Committee
Where else could we make such a fuss?

Sent in by Florence Drage

(NB: This is entirely non-representative of your U3A committee, of course! ☺)

HEADLINES

Man Kills Self Before Shooting Wife And Daughter (*This one I caught in the SGV Tribune the other day and called the Editorial Room and asked who wrote this. It took two or three readings before the editor realized that what he was reading was impossible! They put in a correction the next day.*)

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says. *Really? Ya' think?*

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers. *Now that's taking things a bit far!*

Miners Refuse to Work after Death. *No-good-for-nothing' lazy so-and-so's!*

Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant. *See if that works better than a fair trial!*

War Dims Hope for Peace. *I can see where it might have that effect!*

If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile. *Ya' think?!*

Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide. *They may be on to something!*

Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges. *You mean there's something stronger than duct tape?*

New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group. *Weren't they fat enough?!*

Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft. *That's what he gets for eating those beans!*

Kids Make Nutritious Snacks. *Do they taste like chicken?*

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half. *Chainsaw Massacre all over again!*

Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors. *Boy, are they tall!*

And the winner is...

Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead. *Did I read that right?*

AN OBITUARY PRINTED IN THE TIMES

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Common Sense was preceded in death

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



He is survived by his 5 stepbrothers

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

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



MISSING LINKS

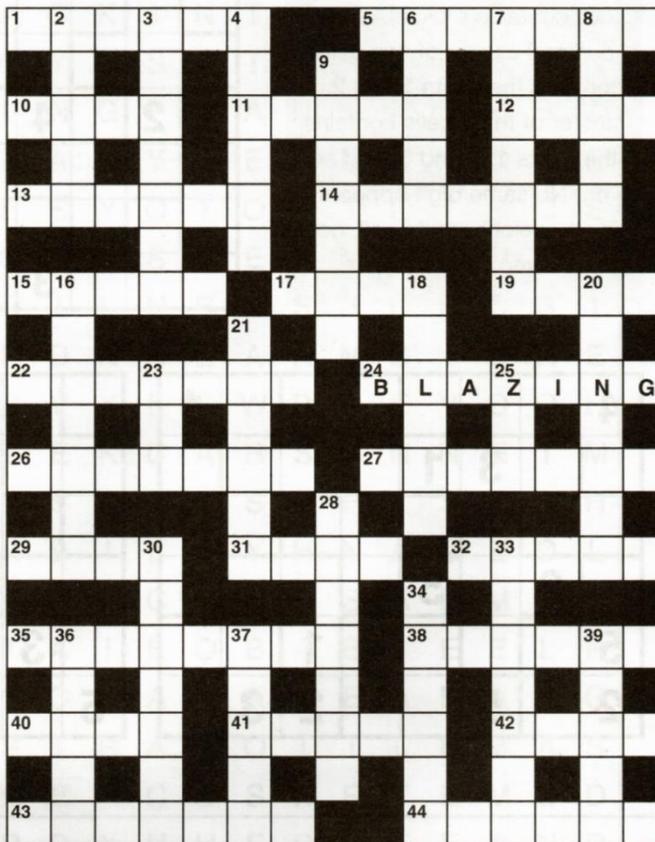
The three words in each clue have a fourth word in common. That's your answer.
 For example, the clue 'Saddles • Sun • Trail (7)' gives the answer **BLAZING** (*Blazing Saddles, Blazing sun, Trailblazing*).

ACROSS

- 1 Dinner • Leather • Potato (6)
- 5 Information • Item • Render (7)
- 10 About • Big • Cat (4)
- 11 Centre • Gas • Racking (5)
- 12 After • Day • High (4)
- 13 Fault • Interior • Systems (6)
- 14 Day • Rhyme • Slopes (7)
- 15 Guy • Love • Luck (5)
- 17 Day • Mid • Rag (4)
- 19 Bag • Cone • Job (4)
- 22 Elephant • South • Violet (7)
- ~~24~~ Saddles • Sun • Trail (7)
- 26 Domestic • Fiction • Rocket (7)
- 27 Account • Box • Safe (7)
- 29 Kettle • Kit • Major (4)
- 31 Green • Home • Slip (4)
- 32 Coach • Door • Fright (5)
- 35 Drinking • Head • Soda (8)
- 38 Paint • Stove • Ware (6)
- 40 Brown • Hug • Teddy (4)
- 41 Rail • Roller • Tea (5)
- 42 Country • Play • Weather (4)
- 43 Art • Shooting • Whispering (7)
- 44 Field • Match • Stick (6)

DOWN

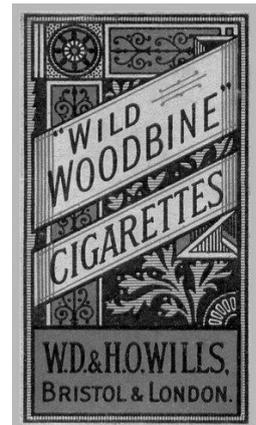
- 2 Home • Stand • Walk (5)
- 3 Cousin • French • Gate (7)
- 4 Fine • Fork • Piano (6)
- 6 Gun • Head • Mint (5)
- 7 Chinese • Fly • Magic (7)
- 8 Love • Short • Teller (5)
- 9 Laser • Line • Thermal (7)
- 16 Duty • Naval • Training (7)
- 18 Bees • Serial • Whale (6)
- 20 Feeling • Shaft • Ship (7)
- 21 Bomb • Force • Shelf (6)
- 23 Bucket • Dry • Pick (3)
- 25 London • Keeper • Petting (3)
- 28 Country • Quantity • Soldier (7)
- 30 Oil • Rights • Water (7)
- 33 Island • Lights • Warden (7)
- 34 Care • Food • Rude (6)
- 36 Buff • Comic • Singer (5)
- 37 Boy • Cloth • Piece (5)
- 39 Force • Guard • Social (5)



DAD'S SHOP

Trams rattled past and, across the road, patients from the mental hospital would stand behind the row of green-painted iron railings waiting for some kind passer-by to fetch their snuff, chocolate or Woodbines from my Dad's little shop across the busy road. It was originally the front room of a small, detached house standing on the corner of the main road and a cul-de-sac. It was a newsagent, tobacconist and confectionery business – and a good deal more besides, as was usual in those days. The hours were long, and my most vivid memories are of my father standing in his customary position behind the counter, with the daily newspapers arranged on a low shelf on his right. He had very poor eyesight, compensated for by extremely acute hearing, a highly developed sense of touch and a first-class memory. Early morning customers would be handed their preferred newspaper and cigarettes without them having to utter a word, and it was nigh on impossible for a schoolchild to sneak a foreign coin past him!

The shop itself was crammed with a huge variety of articles; from ice-cream to Oxo cubes, magazines to mints, cigarettes to chocolate, pipe cleaners to pencils – on the counters, on shelves, in drawers, or on cards attached to wires above head height. The most popular cigarettes were kept in two large, deep drawers under the wooden-topped counter where the neat rows of magazines overlapped with just their titles showing. Closely-packed shelves behind the narrow space where Dad stood held rows and rows of less popular cigarettes and ounce packets of pipe tobacco. Further along was a small set of brass scales, mounted on a mahogany base, with a set of tiny weights for weighing out the snuff, dispensed in triangular paper bags. Further along more shelves carried a selection of toiletries – Silvikrin shampoo, Pond's face cream and Brylcreem - whilst underneath there was a bank of small drawers with brass handles for all kinds of stationery items and greetings cards. Rubbers, rulers, pencils, combs, grips, hairnets and fancy hair-slides attached to cards hung from wires.



Around the next side were arrayed row upon row of bottles of sweets and tins of assorted toffees or chocolate assortments. I remember the 'new' items, such as Spangles, Penguins and Milky Way having to find room amongst the older favourites. The Cadbury penny bars were a favourite, of course, as were the 'four a penny' fruit salad and black jack 'chews', and the brightly coloured 'gobstoppers'! I used to love helping out on this side of the shop, and especially on a Saturday night when the men would queue up to be first to get their Sports Argus and would buy some sweets for the family weekend. We

also sold ice-cream, made very locally by an Italian family who lived up the side road. We used scoops very much like today for the cones, but also sold



wafers. This was much harder, as the first wafer biscuit had to be put into an oblong shape, which was then filled with ice cream, carefully levelled off and the upper biscuit placed neatly on top, before a lever was squeezed to eject the 'wafer' into a square of tissue paper. I remember a few of my early attempts ending up on the floor!

Beneath the sweet counter, and accessed from the customers' side were wooden cases of 'pop'. In the early days this amounted to a choice of anything so long as it was



Tizer, but this was soon augmented by the many flavours of Corona - dandelion and burdock, lemonade, cherryade, etc. Later came Jubbly, an orange drink in cartons, which later we used to freeze alongside the ice-cream and iced lollies.



Two sides of the shop were lined with books, arranged into westerns, mysteries, romance and children's titles. These were available for loan, and were duly stamped with a return date and entered into a book. They were lent out without their dust jackets, and one of my early jobs was to replace these on the returned books, and then put the books back on the shelves. Another of my jobs was to count the pennies from the chewing gum and gob-stopper machines outside the shop. The large old pennies were always damp and they had a peculiar smell (which I can still recall today) as I counted them out and bagged them up in the dusky blue cash bags ready for taking to the bank.

These jobs were done 'in the back' – a sort of sitting room cum office cum stockroom. But, once a year it became an extension to the shop with a massive display of fireworks on the extended table. Customers would come through to make their selection – from Roman candles to rockets, Catherine wheels to sparklers, bangers to fairy cones. Health and safety was not really a big issue then, but perhaps we were just lucky, as this wondrous display was about two yards from the roaring open fire. Those were the days – and yet we all lived to tell the tale!

June Hawkins

FIND THE TOWNS OR CITIES

1. Where the sheep got out.
2. Set fire to the meadow.
3. Toilet weighs a lot.
4. Hay store next to the horse's home.
5. Cook to perfection.
6. Dr Foster's destination.
7. Lady of habit at a public school.
8. Bird from north London meadow.
9. Rocky hill top holds ships.
10. Not the Ledger or Grand National.
11. Watch over the cod.
12. A loved one so heavy.
13. Intelligent when not off.
14. Public school missile.
15. This star gives cured pork to the weight.

Sent in by Tricia Brown



THIN BLACK LINE

Uncertainty fits not with a
Thin black line

Nor does life.

One learns that all cannot be
Encapsulated within
A neat framework

Preferably black.

Easier to distinguish.

Some rise to the unknown,
Embrace it

Some do not.

Written by Mikki Wilde

GROAN JOKES

- Elton John has bought his pet rabbit a treadmill and rowing machine. He's a little fit bunny.
- I was in the car park at Wycombe Hospital and it said: 'Thieves operate here.' I know they're short of doctors, but that doesn't sound good.
- My mate has become so bored in lockdown he got himself a job working in a full size cuckoo clock. It's not great, but at least it gets him out of the house.
- I thought the dryer made my clothes shrink. Turns out it was the fridge.
- I'm not saying my mate is old, but he went to an antiques auction and people were bidding on him.
- I've just been invited to join Slimming World's website and I was asked to accept cookies . . . I think it's a test.
- One minute you're young and fun. The next, you're turning down the car stereo to see better.
- Losing weight doesn't seem to be working for me, so from now on I'm going to concentrate on getting taller.
- Did you see that story about the archaeological dig that's finally unveiled who built King Arthur's Round Table? Sir Cumference.
- There's a new type of head lice going around which is resistant to conventional treatments. It has left scientists scratching their heads.
- What do you call a chicken looking at a bowl of lettuce? Chicken sees a salad!
- A couple of my mates are having a joint party for Chinese New Year and Burns Night. It's called Chinese Burns night. I didn't want to go but they twisted my arm.
- My mate Hugh says he won't make the U2 concert with me next summer. Sad, but I'm still gonna go. With or without Hugh.
- Neckwear competitions are useless. The result is usually a tie.
- Did you know that soul singer Bill Withers had a brother called "Bear" who wrote telephone hold music?
- Bread is a lot like the sun – it rises in the yeast and sets in the waist.
- I took part in a weather puns championship yesterday, and you'll never guess, I won the gold medal. I'm so thrilled. I actually beat the raining champion.
- Someone has collapsed on the luggage carousel at Heathrow Airport. Medics at the scene report they are coming round slowly.
- "What's the Wifi password?" "snowwhiteandthesevendwarfs" "Why is the password so long?" "It said it requires 8 characters.
- You're not fat – just easier to see!

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Gazing from the window of the residential home
The book slipped slowly from her hand,
Alice drifted back in time -
She was running in the sand.
Seventy summers come and gone
Since she was seventeen;
Her mind did all the running now,
Leisurely and serene.

There was a time when Alice ran
On cinder tracks of old.
She proudly held the Union flag
And led her team to gold.
She swapped spikes for sturdy boots
To conquer Alpine climbs
And there she met the man she loved;
They were the best of times.

She answered the call to do her bit
And flew the Spitfire planes
From the factories to the fields,
Where above, boys died in flames.
She would have fought with those heroes
But times were different then.
Though in the clouds she knew that she
Could fly like the Brylcream men.

When children passed, Alice would wave
And remember when she taught
With chalk upon the blackboard
And no online support.
The brainy ones flew high – like her.
But they were far and few
While others cleaned the windows
That Alice was looking through.

Adrian Dobey

SOLUTION TO MISSING LINKS CROSSWORD

ACROSS		DOWN	
1 Jacket	26 Science	2 Alone	23 Ice
5 Useless	27 Deposit	3 Kissing	25 Zoo
10 Boss	29 Drum	4 Tuning	28 Unknown
11 Nerve	31 Land	6 Spear	30 Mineral
12 Noon	32 Stage	7 Lantern	33 Traffic
13 Design	35 Fountain	8 Story	34 Health
14 Nursery	38 Enamel	16 Officer	36 Opera
15 Tough	40 Bear	18 Killer	37 Altar
17 Week	42 Fair	20 Sinking	39 Elite
19 Nose	43 Gallery	21 Parcel	
22 African	44 Hockey		
24 Blazing			

ANSWERS TO FIND THE CITIES QUIZ

1. Ramsgate	6. Gloucester	11. Fishguard
2. Burnley	7. Nuneaton	12. Darlington
3. Luton	8. Finchley	13. Brighton
4. Barnstable	9. Torbay	14. Harrow
5. Bakewell	10. Derby	15. Northampton

A REFLECTION ON 2020!

Had I known in March
 that it was the last
 time I would be in a
 restaurant, I would
 have ordered the
 dessert

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!