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## **FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – June 2019, Edition No 54.**



**Hello. I hope you are okay and doing well. My mental health continues to bother me but I am confident that I will be fine in the long term.**

**In this issue, there is an interview with an inspirational man who had an unfortunate accident and is now in a wheelchair. There are also many of the usual and popular items.**

**Anyone can send in things to be considered (not homophobic, sexist or racist) for publication to: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk)**

**If you want to be interviewed or advertise in the magazine, you can do so by contacting us at the above email address. Best wishes, Dean.**

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[MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS](#)

[KRISHNA FRANCIS TALKS ABOUT HIS CHANGED LIFE](#)

[BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER](#)

[LIFE AT THOO MWEH KHEE by Peter Coats](#)

[LETTERS PAGE](#)

[BIBLE STUDY](#)

[REHOUSING HOMELESS FAMILIES](#)

[AMERICANS SHOULD HELP OUR OWN PEOPLE IN NEED](#)

[DAZE OF MY LIFE \(PART 11\)](#)

[JUNE CHARLTON TALKS ABOUT HER BELOVED GRANDAD](#)

[JUNE CHARLTON'S JAM RECIPES](#)

[ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH](#)

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## MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



### Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

If you feel like a gamble this month then why not start cycling on the dangerous British roads, on a regular basis? You must also start making allowances for those with ‘small man syndrome’ as they don’t realise that they are just as good as anyone else. A good-looking woman may astound you

with her lies. Your B.O. is terrible again so do something about it.

### Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

It is a good time to consider dying your hair as your grey hairs make you look ancient. You will be surprised to learn how hard a successful friend actually works and it may inspire you to ‘up your game’. A book you come across may have a major influence on how you start to view the world. A man with false teeth will make a pass at you – what will you do?

### Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan

You may be fed up with your life at the moment but things will improve if you are patient – life is not always a bed of tulips. An old friend may shock you with their behaviour this week and make you consider if you really should be friends with them. Now that good weather is here again, you may regret being a slob during the winter. Switch energy provider.

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### **Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb**

Consider changing your diet and eating less fried food. An alien will contact you so will you be friends with it – or try and kill it? This month you will have the chance to date a much younger, attractive, person but will you be bothered what other people think? The devil will visit you in a dream, but don't be afraid, as it is just a dream after all.

### **Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar**

You must be brave at the moment as everything seems against you – but ride out the storm and all will be well. A kind window cleaner may do you a good turn but you will find that he wants to know all of your business in return. Why not shed a few pounds and become healthier and more attractive to desperate members of the opposite sex?

### **Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr**

It may be increasingly difficult to spend time with a smelly friend – diplomatically discuss this problem with them or just accept them as they are. Someone may tell you that they'd like to be you, but tell them they wouldn't if they knew about all your faults and problems you have. Start keeping reptiles in your spare bedroom and you will learn to love them.

### **Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May**

You may be looking for romance and feel quite desperate, but don't sell yourself short and settle for second best. If you are feeling fatigued, it is a good time to take a short break. It may cross your mind that you should have had children, or more children, but brush this thought aside and count your blessings. Start to study the mating habits of polar bears.

### **Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun**

Someone you think of as a job may be extremely kind to you when you most need help - and remind you that there is good in all of us. Money is no problem at the moment but do make provision for the times when the sun is not shining on you. Chocolate is definitely your downfall so decide whether you want to continue looking like a fat pig or not.

### **Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul**

This month, two gay women will impress you with their joie de vivre. Consider going for a Turkish shave. A man with a colourful waistcoat will try to con you but don't be dragged into his seedy scam. Be more careful what you put in your mouth as your calorie intake is sky high at the moment. Why not do some gardening or go out walking with friends?

### **Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug**

You may inherit a large sum of money in the near future, but be very careful with it although do remember the people who were there for you when you were down and out. A nosy taxi driver may want to know all your business but be economic with your answers. A good time to break your tedious routine and go on holiday to somewhere warm and cheap.

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### Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep

It really is time you took more care of yourself – your grandparents would be turning in their grave if they could see you now. An attractive woman will turn your head, but before you declare your love for her, see if her beauty is only superficial. Someone will be nasty to you but it is them who have the problem. Eat less fat in your diet and you may live longer.

### Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct

It is a very good time to embark on a new exciting relationship, but do set sail with your eyes wide open and leave room for disappointment. If you are currently questioning your sexuality, don't be afraid to be true to yourself. Buy a nice present for someone who has really helped you out in the past. Try and get your mother off of dope before it takes over her life.

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## [BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

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## **KRISHNA FRANCIS TALKS ABOUT HIS CHANGED LIFE**



**Krishna, can you talk a bit about your life?** I live in Hebden Bridge and I'm now single. I have two young children aged seven and nine.

**How come you're in a wheelchair?** I'm in a wheelchair as one evening last year, I was cycling home from work, and somehow hit a telegraph pole with my shoulder blade. Consequently, two vertebrae in my back were shattered which resulted in a spinal injury. Now

I have no control from my belly button down. It's a very new way of living!

**How as your life changed since the accident?** I've had to sell my house although I had to do this anyway as part of my divorce.

**How long have you been in this flat?** Nearly two months.

**Has it been specially adapted for you?** No. The only thing it's got is a wet room.

**How do you spend your days?** At the moment, I'm not doing an awful lot although last week I went the Inter-Spinal Games at Stoke Mandeville, which is where the idea of Para-Olympians came from. It's full of people who have a spinal injury and compete in sports like: archery, table tennis, pool, soccer, rugby, fencing, swimming etc.

**Did you enjoy competing?** I enjoyed being there.

**Was it free to enter?** Yes. It was a special thing organised for people who are newly injured and are getting used to their new life. It was good for me as since I left hospital, I don't get to be around other people with spinal injuries. So, by going back into that environment, I get to see how they're doing and what they are good and bad at, and how they do certain things. That was really illuminating and made me realise how much further forwards I can move.

**How did you get to Stoke?** Pinderfields Hospital, in Wakefield, put on transport for us.

**Was the coach specially adapted?** Yes. It had some of the seats taken out so you could stay in your wheelchair if you wanted to, or you could sit in the coach seats.

**What's a typical day like for you now?** I don't really have a typical day as such. Until recently, I've been getting up really late and then having breakfast.

**Do you follow a special diet?** Not particularly. I get up and have breakfast and consider what's important in the day; I don't really have much to aim for at the moment.

**Do you feel a bit lost?** Yes. I feel lost but I shouldn't as I've lots of interests, skills and I've a lot of people around me. Yet I still feel like I don't know where to go next.



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**Have you been through a stage of feeling sorry for yourself?** The more I come to terms that this is it and it's not going to get any better, the safer and happier I feel – it's really tiring feeling sorry for yourself.

**How could your life be made better?** I would like some of my worries to be taken out of my life like financial worries. Also, I've got a quite heavy wheelchair and would benefit from having a much lighter one.

**Have you cut down your calorific intake since the accident?** I hope so. But I do really like carbohydrates which contain a lot of calories.

**Have you put on weight?** I don't think so; I don't think I eat as much as I did, but I don't think I eat very well.

**Has a faith in God helped you through this experience?** My faith appears in small actions; I have faith in humanity but I don't have a way to express it. But I think there is something calling us forward with an expectation that we remember where we've been.

**What kind of interests have you got?** I like reading, I play scrabble a lot on my mobile phone and listen to radio four a lot. I don't have a television at the moment. I've decided that my life isn't worth a lot, and therefore, it can be used in any way. Now I'm in a chair everything is so much work, for example, a year ago, it took 3 minutes to get up and dressed each day and now it takes 15 to 20!

**What kind of work did you do before the accident?** I was a labourer but I have done lots of different jobs. I like kitchen work and would like to do that again. Above all I really love films and telling stories visually. It was what I did a long time ago and still calls to me. The opportunity to explain how we can achieve goals and deal with trauma through stories makes me so excited.

**Have you any hopes for the future?** I'd like to see my children again for I haven't seen them for so long. I want them to know that there is so much in the world that is worth seeking out.

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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

## BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



### Otters Contd.

For most otters, fish make up the majority of their diet. But they also eat frogs, crayfish and crabs. Otters are experts at opening shellfish and will also feed on small mammals or birds if they are available. Sea otters hunt clams, sea urchins and shelled creatures.

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Otters are known for their ability to use stones to break open shell fish on their stomachs. They must learn this skill when they are very young as it is so useful later on. As well as being hunters, they can also be very playful creatures although some are solitary.

There are various species of otter including: the European otter in England, the North American river otter and the Sea otter. All otters are classified as marine mammals.

Ref. Wikipedia

### **THE GRIZZLY BEAR (Brown Bear)**



There are many grizzly bears inhabiting North America. Scientists do not use the name grizzly bear but instead call it North American Brown Bear.

On average, bears near the coast are larger, while inland grizzlies are smaller. The Ussuri brown bear is found in Russia, Northern China, Japan and Korea and is sometimes known as the black grizzly, although it is a different sub-species to the

bears in America.

Brown bears originated in Eurasia and travelled to North America 50,000 years ago spreading to the contiguous United States about 13,000 years ago. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the grizzly was classified as 86 distinct species. Then by 1928, only seven kinds of grizzlies remained and by 1953, only one species remained globally. Modern genetic testing reveals the grizzly to be a sub-species of the brown bear.

Ref. Wikipedia

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**[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)**

## **LIFE AT THOO MWEH KHEE**



**Written by Peter Coats**

I wake every morning to the (feels like) ancestral noise of shuttles flying on hand looms and occasionally, half asleep, feel transported back in place to Lower Chisely in the Calder Valley; and back in time, to the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. My old bedroom must

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have made the same repetitive noise in the days before the factories impoverished the skilled weavers of the Pennines. I digress.

Thoo Mweh Khee is a community cum school for Karen refugees from Burma. They are a people who love to weave, whether by a mechanical hand-loom with its flying shuttle, or by doing it on a frame in your lap; they seem to love it and they dress in their own creations. They also have a great love of singing. Consequently, between about 5am and 7pm I hear the swish and clack of flying shuttles, and in the evenings and at weekends, the sound of singing. The singing is very beautiful with a lot of quite complex haunting harmonies; rarely, it's just a single singer with a guitar but it's never really silent here before 9.30 when we all go to bed. The singing and praising seem to affirm them as a people who are exiles from their own land, driven here by war and death and their domestic existence is perpetually uncertain. (Oddly, made more so by the recent moves to open Burma to the west, though all agree it is perhaps for the best in the long run.)

The Karen have survived a 60-year period of systematic harassment, forced labour and genocide and their faith in themselves as a people remains potent and a source of unity and hope. They dream of their own homeland; and who knows, they may get it one day in a federal Burma - *Après la deluge*.

Their plight is part of the mess the British left behind in our retreat from India after the war when General Wingate made promises of independence that were never kept.

Mostly the Karen people (I suppose you could call them a tribe) are Buddhist but large numbers of them have a strongly Christian heritage, and it is amongst this, rather colourful, part of the world church that, for the time being, I dwell. Here, a good few of the families here and maybe a third of the kids are Buddhists too, and they are happy to join in all the singing and praising just the same. Among themselves they have more sense than to be too intolerant between themselves – and why not sing and praise whatever God concept they own for being alive and not hungry and free to be at peace, if only in a limited geographical area. They also manifest the usual intolerance to 'marrying out' that is so deeply rooted in all the 'people of the book', and can be very conservative in their religion! This can cause much sorrow to many young people in the camps who fall in love across the boundaries of being outsiders, upset their families, and have to make terrible choices.

The school or Learning Centre as it calls itself in a post-modern sort of way is centred around a church, and is very overtly Christian. The buildings, classrooms and dormitories are rude and simply built out of a higgledy piggledy mix of concrete, bamboo, teak and thatch and tin. There are hundreds of kids in the whole school, but the part I teach in has about 70 kids aged between 17 and 22, they form grades 11 and 12 in the system here. Grade 12 are being prepared for University (if they can get the papers to go!) and have to suffer an odd curriculum designed for America – I am currently teaching a history of civilisation as a topic that is set entirely in the West with no mention of China at all! There is a lot of politics why we have to follow this GED, American curriculum; the school is vaguely illegal in Thailand, and certainly unrecognised, and so they are not allowed to sit Thai exam papers.



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An essay in itself could be written on how the Thais manage the thousands of refugees that have fled across the border. They ruthlessly deny them any legal right to be in Thailand, while, at the same time, turning a compassionate blind eye to their actual existence here. Therefore, while we can have a school of our own, the children are not allowed any recognition for their achievements. I can see why Thailand almost alone among the nations of the tropics, managed to avoid colonisation – they are a sort of eastern version of perfidious Albion!

The kids (they are young adults but look and behave younger), I have the privilege of teaching (or lecturing to be more accurate) are bright and curious with good written English and fair to middling spoken English. I have to get them to repeat themselves a lot to me before I can fathom what they are saying. (This is also a problem with Thai people where they learn English from people who don't speak it, and have no one to correct their pronunciation.) Their mother tongue is Karen, their next most familiar language is Burmese, then English and lastly some Thai – we have a joke at Thai, neither of us speaking it well but with enough to be able to have a laugh at the funny vowel sounds. It does not seem to have anything in common with Burmese or Karen though I suppose that would seem the same with European languages to an outsider.

As you would expect the religious aspect of life here fascinates me. The church has pews! In fact, I have seen two other churches and they all have pews – Karen folk have no furniture apart from beds and low tables and yet the church has pews. I have always been intrigued and appalled by the muddling of boundaries between religion and culture from wearing shirts and ties to church in Africa to wearing salwah kameez (forgive spelling) to Mosque in UK.

As an agnostic boy, I remember thinking that church going seemed to be a lot about dressing up and hats!

I enjoy the background of seemingly perpetual choirs here, and even the service I attend on Sunday because of the haunting singing – often the tunes are familiar and half the hymns are translations from the Anglican and English Baptist hymn book. I remember enough Anglican services to recognise that the Karen for Holy is Saucy – saucy saucy saucy Lord God almighty etc.

I find my heart very touched by the perpetual singing around me – possibly, because my deconstructing and iconoclastic mind cannot make any judgements about what they are singing about; so, all I hear is lovely music and a celebration of life and being together, without the attendant weirdness of meaning that I find in much sung liturgy. Somehow also, the spirituality of a people in exile gives an added hearty potency to the sense of Church belonging. It is a vivid illustration to me of the healing and transforming power of love, the foundation of our being, without the usual required weird dogmas and pagan like rituals. (This is not to say that the weird dogmas and 'pagan' rituals are not important to them of course – I can only speak for myself and, like Buddha, I am not at all sure what that is!

Many of the children are Buddhist but they keep stum about it, and, when given the opportunity, they are delighted to talk to a galwair pupu, or white grandfather (a grandmother

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is a galwair peepee!!) who tells them its ok to hold the Buddha in respect like Jesus. Because of this unusual candour from a gwailor pupu teacher, all sorts of rumours began to circulate about me. Was I an atheist (shock horror) – a completely alien notion to Christians, Buddhists and animists alike! To deal with the school rumour mill I devoted half a lesson (after the unit on the rise of the first civilisation – Sumerian apparently!!) to explaining about Quakers, their seeking light in all faiths and their silent worship. After this, the closet Buddhists began to whey (bow with hands together - a, non-Christian, sign of great respect in SE Asia) me discreetly. (The handshaking affected by Christians is another example of this muddle between culture and spirituality – like the pews). I also heard that I have a reputation as a good singer, which astounded me. When alone, I often sing to cheer myself up and I was a bit horrified to learn that I had been overheard; but very flattered to be considered a good singer by such a people. It may be, and probably is, that they were simply being kind.

They, of course, (like me in respect to them), don't have a clue what I am singing about but I come from a folk heritage and naturally my solitary songs are often quite saucy, rather than saucy saucy saucy. Ho ho ho.

The reason the Buddhists keep stum is because much of the funding comes from either Korean or American Christians who seem obsessed with 'pulling them away from Buddhism' as if it were some sort of poisonous addiction or a disease. Moreover, to them, and their fantastical, magical world of being saved from a lake of eternal fire, I suppose it is. Personally, I find it all rather depressing and it renders the teachings of the church even more idiotic than ever with its endless obsessions with our bodies and limited view of life, wordy gibberish and theological gobbledygook. The church remains at heart, a gift and a source of unity, fellowship and hope in a mad broken world given over to mammon. However, it does so despite its absurd, complicated, impoverished and redundant teachings – certainly not because of them. Woops, I'm off on one.

Anyway; au consequence, the external donors want a huge degree of control of everything (even who contracts to build donated buildings!) and they stipulate in the miserly way only the religious 'people of the book' can, that the school only teaches Christians. They believe that only Christian children attend the school, the school sort of colludes with this belief out of love and compassion for the reality of folk. Attendance of the 3 'devotional' services a day is compulsory but I don't think the kids mind – it's another opportunity to sing!

Actually, I think the Buddhists rather prefer it to their mindful chanting. Buddhism remains a sort of monkish religion without a lot for the laity to do so they go along to church, adults and all, for the singing and the fellowship. If the Koreans found out there might be funding problems and the Americans would get in a stew about hell fire and start to donate to Israel or something to hurry along the end times.

Looked at like this it's all completely bonkers but through the eyes of compassion it's a daily miracle of love. Everyone eats, the children get a better start in life, the community get to sing a lot and weave away in peace, and the donors get to imagine they are saving souls from

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Hell. It's a win, win, situation and who would not thank God for that? And with the eye of faith, see Her invisible loving hand in it. Saucy saucy saucy!

Meanwhile on the other side of the river they are still rounding up the people into labour camps. The current wheeze over there is to resettle the exiled Karen back in jerry built new towns in Burma to comply with the West's demands. These towns are being built on slave labour and there is considerable anxiety here over everyone's future as once they are built, Thailand might kick them all out.

Before closing, I should make a mention of the aptly named, Pastor Peacefully the, sort of, local Minister. The daily miracle that is Thoo Mweh Khee is partly poured out into being through him and I am completely in awe, (almost a sense of gratitude), of him. Besides being Pastor to the church and sort of Chaplin to the school he is also a player in the wider political wing of the Karen and the democratic Karen independence army – he must use a very long spoon to deal with these folks. As far as I can tell, they have gone like the IRA and had to get very dirty hands in order to finance themselves with drugs and stolen teak. And yet and yet – who knows, some folk talk of him in terms of being the first President of a Karen state. To do this he spends a lot of time over the river – going 'inside' as they say here.

He also manages to keep the missionaries on side; and in a weird, pharisaical sort of way, I reckon he must use an even longer spoon to deal with some of them. At least you get straight talk from a warlord, uncluttered with piety and miracle obsessions.

But what I really love about Pastor Peacefully is his grounded and unsentimental compassion, it is symbolised for me in his love of hunting and fishing; every Saturday he disappears down to the river to fish. He does this without mercy using a sort of contraption involving an inner tube and a car battery, and a lot of protein is eaten.

As I am sure you can tell I love it here, despite the fact that I get fed up with the sound of myself rabbiting on about the Samaritans or the environment; (it often seems in my imagination that I sound like some of the worst teachers I remember from my secondary school). I have decided to return here for a month in January to help year 12 with a bit of extra tutoring before their exams. Who knows I may get to go with Peacefully and learn the ways of electric fishing!

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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

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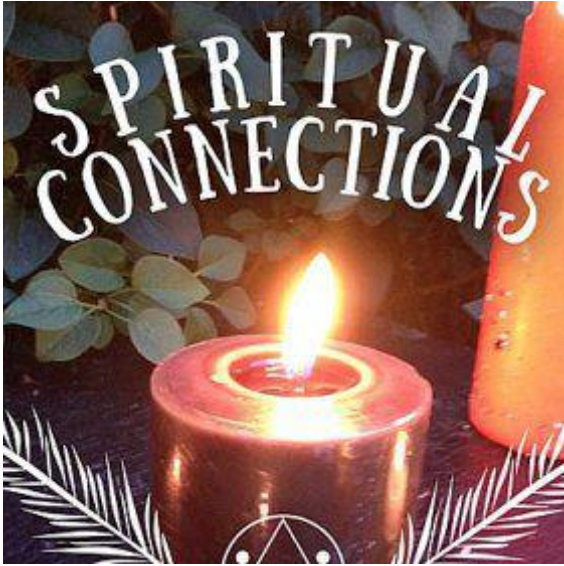
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## LETTERS PAGE



### Dear Editor

I recently heard the terrible news that a friend of a friend had killed himself. Although I did not know the person in question, I was very saddened by this news.

However, I am of the opinion (because of personal experience) that this person could have got through his horrible situation if only he had

waited a while until he felt he could cope better. I am in no way devaluing how he felt, but I know that things and situations change.

**Marylin Widdop, Manchester**

### Dear Editor

I have a friend who is a professional gambler (he plays the odds) and I kind of admire him for taking on the big boys in the gambling world and often winning.

I can't say I am pro-gambling but I think it is good when David can take on Goliath and beat him!

**Frank Wentworth**

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**Dear Editor**

Although I would not describe myself as homophobic and think it is unimportant who loves who, I must admit that I don't really understand homosexuality, as I look to nature where a male and female come together to reproduce. Can anyone enlighten me please?

**Michael Broadbent, London**

**Dear Editor**

Can I just say how pleased I am that there is a Brexit extension rather than the UK leaving with a disastrous No Deal.

I also think that those who lied about our financial relationship with Europe should be taken to court for they misled millions and led to many people voting to leave the EU.

**Amie Wild, Folkstone**

**Dear Editor**

I have a friend who suffers from mental health problems and I am determined to support her as much as I can as she is a lovely, talented person.

Even though mental health problems are discussed more openly in today's society, I still think we have some way to go before the subject is adequately discussed and accepted. It can happen to anyone!

**Francis Cartwright, Castleford**

**Dear Editor**

Everyone knows how greedy top footballers are, but it is us the public who are to blame for their superfluous wealth. If we stopped subscribing to expensive television channels and stopped attending matches, even for a short while, then things would have to change. Plus, we would keep more of our hard-earned money.

**Mary Lennon, Northern Island**



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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

## BIBLE STUDY



**Submitted by Peter Smith**

John 6.29

The centurion answered and said, "Lord .... only speak a word and my servant will be healed". When Jesus heard it, he marvelled and said .... "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel". Matthew 8:8,10 (NKJV)

How did Jesus know the centurion had such faith? By his **WORDS**.

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well". Mark 5:25,27,34 (NKJV)

How did Jesus know the woman had such faith? By her **ACTION** (touching his garment).

Words and action. These are the keys to faith. What we say and what we do show what we really believe.

Life brings us uncertainty, difficulties and heartbreak. But we can get through these by faith - by what we say and do.

Look at Romans 8:28: "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God". If we truly believe this, we SAY, when a problem appears, "I'm troubled by (the problem), but I know that whatever happens it will be for good in the end". Then we DO what we can to cope.



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Aegis have branches all over the North of England with one in Hebden Bridge as well as Halifax and other areas, simply check out the [Aegis Contact Page](#) to find out more information. This is a great introduction to Martial Arts for both young and old with qualified instructors in a relaxed setting.

---

**[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)**

## **REHOUSING HOMELESS FAMILIES**



When a household relocates, they are provided with whatever they need to live comfortably in their new home. The furnishings, bed linen, dishes and towels are provided. We feel really strongly that the items have to be new as this helps people feel that they are making a new a start. I have come to the conclusion through buying all the merchandize that foam bed mattress pads are a good investment to make. We are unable to afford the best quality mattresses and box springs. The foam bed mattress pads add cushioning and softness. The foam mattress pads also help the

sheets to fit tighter to the mattress and keep them from slipping. As our families come from varied backgrounds and are often emotionally broken from being homeless, I need to carefully rehouse them. I can also evaluate the needs of a family by seeing what possessions they have and understand what new things they may need.

I have realised that to begin a non-threatening relationship with older children, it is often best to do some kind of task with them. Often these children do not know how to make a bed. I have them put sheets on the foam mattresses. Also, we have numerous quilts that have been donated to our program by local churches. I let them choose which colour and pattern quilt they want as this helps them feel that it is their home. If for a child chooses their own quilt then they tend to take more care of it. My role is to help households turn their lives around so that they feel more secure. Giving children a sense of responsibility seems to be the best way to prevent homelessness for the next generation. If you are seeking to grow as a person and to help others, reach out to a homeless person. You do not need to provide money, but rather share the skills that you have learnt to help them overcome hardship and misery.

---

**[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)**

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### AMERICANS SHOULD HELP OUR OWN PEOPLE IN NEED



America is the most "kind and giving" nation on the planet. Each year Americans donate more than \$240 billion to more than 700,000 charities. From the devastating Tsunami that struck the Pacific Rim and Southeast Asia in late December 2004, to the havoc of

Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, that ravaged millions in 2015, Americans have dug deep to support local, national and global relief efforts.

As a country we must understand and accept the grim reality that millions of Americans, including helpless children, exist in the equivalent of third world conditions or so says Dr. Hackett, a humanitarian who has helped more than 100,000 people in need. In her new book, "Making A Difference: Changing the World One Penny and One Minute at a Time", she includes stories of people living in poverty, ways to identify such people in your own backyard and she gives numerous ways in which people can help. She also advises familiarizing yourself with your community's data; rates of homelessness, number of older people and children living in poverty, etc; and identifying which agencies exist to help them:

- \* Getting dry and clean socks on the feet of homeless individuals can significantly lower foot disease and injury, one of the most common health issues they experience.
- \* Collecting fruit that will be discarded by your local grocery store and donating it to a soup kitchen, which can feed and improve the diet of many homeless people.
- \* Putting together toiletry packages, a practice that remains in vogue when international catastrophes hit, and also getting them to students from low-income families through schools. This can help kids and teenagers enjoy a simple bath.

Dr. Hackett's main message is that we need to help our own before we can genuinely help the whole the world. " To make bring about real change, we should take care of those in our own backyards initially. The socially conscious members of Hollywood agree that an American kid forced to hunt for food is every bit as deserving of our aid as one living in Africa."

Dr. Hackett suggests choosing one or more groups that desperately need help. Suggestions are: Helping elders living in poverty; reaching out to the homeless; feeding the starving through soup kitchens, food kitchens and sandwich lines; shining your light on low-income day-care centres and schools; and meeting the unique requirements of women and children residing in domestic violence shelters.

" Everyone can help in numerous ways," she states. "Everyone must have their own individualized 'Make a Difference' strategy that initially focuses their efforts in their own

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**HOW - [Visit here](#)**

community. This will help you to understand what is required help you to set your goals for helping those in your community.

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**[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)**

## **DAZE OF MY LIFE (PART 11)**



**Written by Bill Pearce**

Plot night finally arrives!

### **Plot Night – Bangers and Splash**

Much is written about the homeless these days, but I had a taste of it myself in late March 1957. On a warm, early spring afternoon, I was

wandering home from school, congratulating myself on the fact that I still held my dual role of gang leader and milk monitor.

I approached our front door, turned the handle, pushed, but there was no movement of the door – it wouldn't budge! I pushed again, but the door held firm.

“Mom! It's me! Will somebody let me in?”, I yelled.

By now, I was wondering where everybody was.

Just then, Mrs Walsh came out from next door, number 44.

“ ‘ave yer forgotten, Billy? They've moved to yer new ‘ouse today”.

“Thank you, Mrs Walsh,” I said, as I remembered that I'd been told that morning that we were moving to 1, The Newlands that day. It was only about 500 yards from our old house, but mother thought it was a bit posher. Also, the Clarke family had moved into 4, The Newlands a few months earlier. Mom wasn't to be outdone!

Before we get back to the plot of 1957, I would like to spend a short time remembering a school Sports Day from early July of that year. Taking place on the field behind Newlands County Primary School, it was our ‘Chariots of Fire’ moment. A chance to exhibit our athletic prowess!

I was a second year and our Phil was in the first year. I needed to do well and achieve results that were befitting a gang leader.

Phil was entered in the Junior 1 boys' 60 yards flat-race and, rather embarrassingly, the J1 boys' skipping race. Being in touch with his feminine side, he easily won the skipping race,



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leaving Gary Noden trailing in his wake.

My first race was the J2 boys' 60 yards flat race. My opponents were Peter Morrison, Peter Smith and Keith Taylor. I won it at a canter. It was amazing how the promise of a few sweets managed to slow them all down! Reputation intact, they found out how fast I could really run when they came to collect their 'bribes'. I never had any sweets in the first place! Talk about initiative!

Other names from that day come to mind readily – Alex McNee in the J1 boys' obstacle race, Peter Denton in the sack race and Roy Benbow throwing the cricket ball. For the girls, there were Jenny Whipp, Hilary Curtiss and Joan Hitchcox.

There are too many names to mention here, but they are all featured above and contributed much to my happy childhood memories.

Now, back to the plot, which had been moved to the rec (recreation ground) for safety reasons. Some of the neighbours were against having their houses burnt down – miserable sods! Moving the bonfire was a considerable logistical feat, but we managed, with good team work. Reconstruction of the plot was vitally important. Included in the plans was a central den, where we could hide and watch out for suspicious looking characters, especially the Beechwood lot. It also had to have a flat piece at the top so the Guy could be securely tied. We didn't want him to escape, did we?

The Beechwood gang must have gone soft that year, as nothing had been stolen. The big lads from Sowerby decided they would go down and check out the rival plot anyway. The Pearce – Clarke gang followed at a safe distance.

		NEWLANDS COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL				JULY 1957	
No	EVENT	BLUE	GREEN*	RED	*YELLOW	1 <sup>st</sup> (5 Pts)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (3 Pts)
1	J3 BOYS CRICKET BALL	C. EASTON	R. BENBOW	P. DENTON	B. BENJAFIELD		
2	J4 " " "	S. CLARKE	T. GOTHARD	J. GARNETT	R. KIRBY		
3	J1 " 60' FLAT RACE	G. NODEN	R. CAMPBELL	S. SHEPPARD	P. PEARCE		
4	J1 GIRLS " " "	R. AUSTIN	J. BENJAFIELD	H. CURTISS	P. THOMAS		
5	J1 BOYS SKIPPING RACE	G. NODEN	R. CAMPBELL	S. SHEPPARD	P. PEARCE		
6	J1 GIRLS " " "	S. BRACKLEHURST	J. BENJAFIELD	P. NOLAN	K. M. NAMAKA		
7	J2 BOYS 60' FLAT RACE	P. MORRISON	W. PEARCE	P. SMITH	KEITH TAYLOR		
8	J2 GIRLS " " "	C. GREENWOOD	J. WHIPP	M. KINNEAR	J. RATTIGAN		
9	J2 BOYS SKIPPING RACE	S. LUMB	K. WADE				
10	J2 GIRLS " " "	C. GREENWOOD	J. WHIPP	S. DENTON	B. PARKER		
11	J1 BOYS OBSTACLE RACE	S. GIBSON	A. M'NEE	A. PULLEN	C. BURBIDGE		
12	J1 GIRLS " " "	E. MEDLOCK	V. MIDGLEY	H. HURST	J. MAWER		
13	J2 BOYS " " "	M. SCOTT	W. PEARCE	H. TAYLOR	M. PRINCE		
14	J2 GIRLS " " "	G. ASHLEY	J. HITCHCOX	D. MILEHAM	A. HURST		
15	J3 GIRLS SACK RACE	M. HOWARTH	S. STOTT	P. PALLAN	W. SHEPPARD		
16	J3 BOYS " " "	C. EASTON	R. BENBOW	P. DENTON	S. CARTER		
17	J4 " " " "	S. DOYLE	S. HARTLEY	J. GARNETT	D. ASPINALL		
18	J4 GIRLS " " "	R. BROOK	S. FIELDHOUSE	P. BENJAFIELD	C. HARTLEY		
19	J3 " 80' SKIPPING RACE	G. MARSHALL	P. HELLWELL	CHRISTINE SMITH	W. SHEPPARD		
20	J4 " " " "	R. BROOK	J. LICKLEY	C. HARTLEY	P. BENJAFIELD		
21	J3 BOYS 80' FLAT RACE	T. KAY	S. RAY	G. HARTLEY	S. CARTER		
22	J4 " " " "	J. ELLIS	T. GOTHARD	N. HIBBERT	E. RIMMER		
23	J3 GIRLS " " "	G. MARSHALL	L. WOOD	CHRISTINE SMITH	J. FRIZER		
24	J4 " " " "	L. WILCOCK	S. FIELDHOUSE	H. WHIPP	R. HELLWELL		
25	HOUSE RELAY BOYS	G. NODEN, T. KAY, P. MORRISON, J. ELLIS	R. CAMPBELL, S. RAY, W. PEARCE, T. GOTHARD	S. SHEPPARD, G. HARTLEY, P. SMITH, N. HIBBERT	P. PEARCE, S. CARTER, A. HURST, E. RIMMER		
26	HOUSE RELAY GIRLS	R. AUSTIN, G. MARSHALL, J. HITCHCOX	J. BENJAFIELD, L. WOOD, S. FIELDHOUSE	H. CURTISS, C. SMITH, M. KINNEAR, H. WHIPP	P. THOMAS, J. MAWER, J. RATTIGAN, A. HURST		



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### *The original Sports Day programme. Thanks to my Dad for saving it.*

Our John and his mate Nobby Hibbert said they recognised some of the branches on the rival plot. Very observant was our kid! Their plot was almost unguarded, as there was only one sickly looking kid with a snotty nose on duty. The branches – supposedly recognised by John – were removed.

We dragged them the half mile to our plot and arranged them accordingly. The Beechwood gang would then sneak back, usually late at night, and take them back. This ritual carried on until plot night.

Prior to the big night, any spare money we could get was spent on penny bangers and two-penny cannons. These were ‘let off’ under tin cans, in walls and even down the slide on the rec. No one ever seemed to get hurt and much fun was had.

In the final week before Guy Fawkes’ night, the adults began to get involved. In those days, the whole community joined in. Some supplied the spuds for roasting whilst others started baking and making plot toffee. No burgers in those days! We always had the plot on November 5<sup>th</sup>, whichever day of the week it happened to fall on.

The school day dragged and all the talk was of what we were going to do, or what we would eat that evening. Once home, tea was rushed down and it was on with our wellies and out to the plot.

Kelvin, who was excitable at the best of times, needed three wees behind various trees. He was always affected this way by big events! More by luck than judgement, the Guy was hoisted to the top platform by the older boys. It had a look of a chap who had passed away four weeks previously in old Sowerby village. His family must have passed his clothes on! Although we were more than capable, we had to wait for the adults to come out to light the fire. After what seemed an age, my Dad and Mr Clarke came out to start things off.

There was a murmur of approval and great relief as the fire took hold. Health and safety in those days wasn’t what it is now and there were many near misses on Bonfire Night. Rockets were launched from pop bottles which often fell over, requiring certain members of our group to duck to avoid injury. The rogue rocket then hit the side of one of the houses and exploded in a cascade of sparks. Catherine Wheels flew off pins and whirled into anybody standing nearby. Best of all were the now banned jumping crackers, which shot every which way, seemingly with a mind of their own. My Dad wasn’t very pleased when one of these mischievous crackers selected him as its target.

Phil and I turned away. We looked at each other and started sniggering.

After about an hour, the mothers started bringing out plates of sandwiches, jugs of lemonade or squash, buns and trays of bonfire toffee to the waiting tables and mouths. The Dads were checking on the potatoes that had earlier been placed in the fire. When ready, these were smothered in butter and handed out. Some of them were as black as coal, but were nevertheless consumed with much enthusiasm. There were always gallons of tea to be had. Coffee was not much in evidence then, except for the odd cup of Camp Coffee, which I believe was made of chicory essence.

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Kelvin was encouraged to stay away from the drinks until he regained better control of his bladder.

There was usually a lull of about half an hour in the fireworks 'display', whilst everybody ate their fill of the goodies on offer. I sheepishly took more than my fair share of the bonfire toffee, which was stashed away to be shared by our gang the day after.

In those days, you could buy a reasonable selection box of fireworks for a pound and if you could afford a fiver, your box contained the best on offer.

Bellies full, me and the gang ran ourselves ragged, chasing each other with sparklers, stopping to watch Snowstorms, Volcanoes and Roman Candles, and staring in awe as another rocket made its way skyward. There was usually another school day the day after the plot and the night never finished later than 10.00 pm.



*A box of fireworks in the 1950s*

Once home, we had our clothes stripped off and me and Phil were put in the same bath, looking like midget coalminers, black from the smoke and dirt. We also slept in the same bed, but sleep didn't come easy as we recalled stories from the night and tried to remember where we had stashed the toffee. All in all, a very satisfactory night!

If it was school the day after, mother wouldn't let us go out to fulfil our firework collecting duties. That would have to wait. School was awash with plot night stories – who had had the best plot, who had eaten the most. Someone had even seen a ghost!

“Pipe down, Pearce, and concentrate on your work!”

“Yes, Miss”.

School eventually ended. There was a race home – all of 400 yards away!

“We're home, Mom! We're laiking out!”.

“Don't get mucky!” came the response.

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The omens weren't good. It had been raining on and off all day. When we reached the plot, it had gone out with all the rain. Not an ember left to rekindle!

The spent fireworks were all soggy and the paper we'd wrapped round our toffee was very much the same – stuck to it in a sticky mess! We decided not to bother picking it off.

It was a disappointing end to the plot season. It was getting dark and we all went home a little despondent, but the night before had been great!

And, of course, next year's plot would be the biggest and bestest ever!

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**[BACK TO CONTENT](#)**

## **JUNE CHARLTON TALKS ABOUT HER BELOVED GRANDAD**



From being a little girl of about 4-5 years old, I liked going to my grandparents who lived next door to us. My grandma had thirteen children but six of them died leaving: auntie Phyllis (who was the oldest), Christopher (Chris), David (Widgie), Alfie, Tommy, Helen and Joan.

As I got a bit older, uncle Widgie used to say that I could be a bridesmaid when he got married if I did several things for him like clean his shoes but when he got married, Auntie Freda as I called her, asked one of her sisters instead of me, so I didn't get to be a bridesmaid after all. But I was still young and so it didn't matter much to me – which was just as well!

I used to like sitting under my grandma's table listening to them all talking. I also used to like baking with my grandad when my grandma went to see her other family in Stockton-on-Tees. I thought the world of my grandad and he always seemed to be on his own a lot because of my grandma's visits up north.

As time went by my grandad started to get poorly a lot and as I was then working, I couldn't see him as much. I usually called around after work with us living next door. He always tried to talk to me as we were very close. Unfortunately, he suffered with his chest and was always coughing. One day I came home from work and went straight round as my grandma had told my mother that his condition had worsened. When I saw him, tears came to my eyes even though I tried to control myself as I didn't want my grandad to see my crying. He was very ill and I could see that his condition was very serious. I sat with him and told him everything was going to be alright, but it was heart-breaking to see him struggling to breathe. I told him he was going to get better, but not long after that he closed his eyes and I knew he'd gone. It was so sad.

I missed my grandad every day for a long time but eventually I came to terms with the fact that I'd never see him again.

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---

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

## JUNE CHARLTON'S JAM RECIPES



### Egg Plum Jam

Cook seven pounds of egg plums in a pint of water, until they fall. Remove the stones and add seven pounds of sugar. Return to heat and boil gently for twenty minutes. Pot and seal.

### Blackberry Jelly

Cook eight pounds of blackberries in two pints of water until soft. Strain them through a jelly bag or hair sieve, but do not rub or squeeze the pulp. Measure the juice and return it to the pan with three quarters of a pound of loaf sugar to a pint of juice. Boil steadily until a little of the jelly sets when tested on a cold saucer, then pot and seal down.

### Rhubarb Jam

Cut four pounds of rhubarb into small pieces and mix with the grated rind and juice of two lemons. Add five pounds of sugar and leave to stand for twenty-four hours. Then bring to the boil stirring all the time, and boil steadily for half an hour. This jam should be made during August and keeps well for winter.

### Raspberry Jam

Pick over and weigh the raspberries and have ready the same weight in sugar. Put the fruit into a preserving pan with a quarter of the sugar and bring gently to the boil, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon. Add the remainder of the sugar and boil fast for 10 minutes. This jam sets well and keeps a fine colour.

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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

## Andrew Wilkinson's Guest Stars

### Libra

You seem to be worried about your poor life-style and about getting older. Do something about it soon, drag yourself off that sofa, join the gym, work out a couple of times a week, seek out your local walking club, eat only salads, nuts and berries. You won't live longer - it will just feel like it!

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### **Aquarius**

A tall, dark and very handsome stranger will come your way and you will be surprised when he says that he fancies your best friend. Please donate heavily to any African charities, remember there are many leaders waiting for a new jet.

### **Pisces**

You seem to be yearning for travel to exotic, distant and mysterious destinations and this will definitely enrichen your life, but begin slowly, perhaps with a weekend in Skegness. Don't be upset if someone calls you old and ugly – you are not that old.

### **Aries**

This week you will receive a call from someone to tell you that a distant relative has passed away, leaving you thousands of pounds – and all you need to do is send your personal details and cheque card for they will deal with everything, but don't forget to include your pin number!

### **Taurus**

Your star sign means you are a strong character, faithful and true, reliable and trustworthy; however, you appear to be an exception to the rule. Have you ever wondered why no one ever told you that you are attractive?

### **Gemini**

Take care if you go dancing this weekend, someone is liable to take advantage of your Paso Doble and this time remember to wear good shoes as it's really hard to do the quick step in wellington boots.

### **Cancer**

With Mercury entering a no-fly zone this month you may be tempted to march to Whitehall with your banners demanding more work and less pay – this will create lots of excitement in Westminster but will do you no good.

### **Leo**

This month you are under the influence of Saturn and Carlsberg. You may be concerned by the large brown marks on your grandmother's chin, but there is no need for alarm as it's just stains from her chewing tobacco.

### **Virgo**

Be wary of someone who will try to rock your faith but trust your instincts and do not doubt your beliefs for a moment: Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny.

### **Scorpio**



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For the Scorpios amongst you involved in show business, the idea of a film “River Dance with skipping ropes” seems like a good idea, but the drag queen tour of the Middle East may prove a little unpopular.

### **Sagittarius**

It's time to reflect on your life – how do you register on its good/bad scales? It's difficult to remember all the bad things, but you did good things too like the time you found a hundred pounds in the ATM machine and only kept half of it. Not to mention the other good things that are too numerous to remember.

### **Capricorn**

Your stars suggest you should face up to your fears so defeat that vertigo by hanging from a high balcony by your fingertips. End your acute shyness by running across the local football pitch dressed only in flip flops – you will be surprised by the results.

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## **BACK TO CONTENTS**

### **ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH**



#### **Questions:**

- (1) What nationality was the playwright William Shakespeare?
- (2) Who is the lead singer of the group Simply Red?
- (3) What is an octagon?
- (4) Where is Guyana?
- (5) What is the chemical symbol for Helium?
- (6) What is Fibromyalgia?
- (7) Who played the lead male role in the film Pulp Fiction?
- (8) What nationality is the boxer Oscar de la Hoya?
- (9) What is the French word for nose?
- (10) Who plays Dev Alahan in the soap Coronation Street?
- (11) What is the capital of Chile?
- (12) What was 'Big Daddy's' profession?
- (13) How old was Adolf Hitler when he died?
- (14) Who was Adolf Hitler briefly married to?
- (15) Where is Hebden Bridge?
- (16) What instrument did Liberace play?
- (17) What was David Bowie's real name?
- (18) What language is spoken mainly in Slovakia?
- (19) Who invented the transistor?
- (20) Where was the footballer David Beckham born?

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### Answers:

(1) English (2) Michael James Hucknall (3) A plane figure with 8 straight sides and 8 angles  
(4) South America (5) He (6) A long term condition that causes pain, fatigue and muscle  
stiffness (7) John Travolta (8) American (9) Nez (10) Jimmi Harkishin (11) Santiago (12)  
Wrestling (13) 56 (14) Eva Braun (15) In the upper Calder Valley in West Yorkshire,  
England (16) Piano (17) David Robert Jones (18) Slovak (19) William Shockley, John  
Barden and Walter Brattain (20) Leytonstone, London

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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

**Editor's Final Word:** Thank you for reading this publication and I hope you enjoyed  
the experience. If you want to get involved with the magazine, please contact us at:

[dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk)

Best wishes, Dean, Brenda and Robert.