

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – September 2020. Edition No 69.



Hello. I hope you are coping during this pandemic. Things seem to be slightly returning to normal but I think it's important we are all very careful until things get fully better.

If you want to contribute/donate/advertise in the magazine, you can contact us at: dean@fthm.org.uk . Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert and Graham

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MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

This month a blind woman will help you to see that there is much more to this life than the visual world and touch your heart in a way you've not experienced before. Also, some of the social seeds you scattered in the near past will start to bear fruit and make you feel good about your future and fill

you with confidence. Eat fewer sweet things to lose some weight.

Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

The crocodile tears that you have shed for the loss of an ex-lover will fool no one this month as everyone knows you are a ruthless predator who cares only about yourself and lacks compassion for others. You have known success in your life but was it all worth it when parts of your life are still void of true love? You will not experience happiness without changing.

Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan

You have been caught in a very good-looking spider's web, so now you must decide whether to struggle free or accept your situation – and devour any crumbs of attention that are cast your way. It is time you also did something about your physical fitness which is very poor. At least your mind is in good shape and you have many friends who cherish and love you.

Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb

Happiness is a transient state so make the most of how you feel now and squeeze as much pleasure as you can out of your current situation as everything constantly changes. People may question your choice of friends, but something will happen this week which will make you think you have made the right choices all along. You may fall in love again very soon.

Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar

Someone with bad feet may hold you back but then will really help you this month. Things are gradually improving for you but you must always proceed with care and diligence. A song may remind you of when you were much younger and deeply in love. You have been called a fly-by-night in the past but now is the time to show your true colours and to shine.

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Aries 21 Mar - 20 Apr

This month you will realise that you have made a mistake by building a big wall around you and thus, creating a social prison and isolation for yourself. A religious man may try to convert you to his belief system but remain open-minded and continue to find your own way in life. You have been a very selfish and greedy person but now is a good time to change.

Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May

It is a good time to try and quit smoking as your stress levels are much lower – you would also make your partner very happy if you achieved this. Your lack of personal hygiene is becoming more evident to your nearest and dearest so do something about it. Time continues to elapse and still you squander it. It is also a good time to taste some crocodile meat.

Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun

This year has been a difficult one for all but your clouds of depression will soon lift and the sun will soon shine in your life again. You seem to be proud of your ignorance which is a shame as you have great potential. Someone who has been very ill will impress you with their new found joie de vivre, and the way they now look at life. Buy some garden gnomes.

Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul

Alcohol seems to be your answer to everything but someone new will show you that the answer is not in the bottom of a glass and that your glass is actually half-full. Your life has still not got back to normal, but you will feel happier in yourself. If you want to attract a new partner then change your bait and your chat up lines which are dated and boring.

Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug

You may not be sleeping very well at the moment, but is this surprising when you treat everyone like dirt? – Clean up your act quickly and some of your dreams may even come true! A stupid person may have the insight to solve a long-standing problem for you. A sexy, vain person may come into your life and you will have to choose between lust and love.

Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep

Someone will try and buy your affections – but do you want to be bought so cheaply? Also, a person who once rejected you romantically will come back on the scene and tell you that they made a big mistake - what will you do? It is a very good time to take up a new hobby as it will open up new horizons for you. Try to accept that you will always be very ugly.

Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct

An attractive woman will give you the green light, but do you really want to hurt your long-standing, loyal friend who is always there for you? Some people think you're a space cadet, but this month, will start to realise that you are all there. Unexpectedly, a stupid old cow you know will start to give you some cheesy compliments that will make you feel very uneasy.

CHAPTER THREE OF DEREK GREENWOOD'S STORY

Culture Shock – such confusion: returning to my country of origin, perhaps surprisingly, WAS a culture shock of the first order.

On even careful examination, comparing life in the UK with life in Denmark, I had not anticipated the shock of the differences on my return to England.

In attempting to address my response to these different variances in society's approach to daily issues large and small I found myself recapping my recent years amongst a nation where the emotional content of everybody's lives demands and receives interest, concern, support and respect. I realised that I was already 'missing' key aspects of my recent life in Denmark without being exactly able to put my finger on them.

Further turmoil, mental and emotional and I was beginning to recognise that the under-nourished nature of relationships in the UK was NOT something I felt that I would be able to seamlessly slip back into without a period of adjustment.

Everything that had seemed sensible, effortless and warm and friendly in Denmark suddenly seemed tiring and stressful (I don't DO stress – do I?)

I applied for a position with a London-based publisher, working as a publisher's agent in London and the South East. After a few weeks of settling in, geographically and organisationally, I started to find my feet and re-discovered my confidence.

The company published several well-known and respected authors and I became involved in representing their interests together with meeting other authors through regular involvement in, largely London-based, organisations such as The Poetry Society, organising book fairs, exhibitions and other literary events. I spent considerable time organising author visits and book signings across London and the South East and driving and entertaining authors such as Laurie Lee, John Updike, Frank Muir and many others. Most of the authors were friendly, respectful, good company and seemed appreciative of my input.

Whilst living and working on the edges of London, through friends I met my second wife, a German academic. Her English was perfect, although it was frustrating for me to have no encouragement to speak and improve my relatively limited amount of German. We became good friends, recognising our 'touching points' and areas of mutual interest and, after agreeing to get married, (largely to please our respective mothers), we proceeded to rub amiably along together in a rather brotherly/sisterly way for the next twenty years!

Partly as a result of my mother being diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, we made the decision to move 'up north' and I managed a small academic bookshop at Leeds Metropolitan University and from here was head-hunted by the University Bookshop in Manchester as Manager of Personnel and Training, responsible for managing and training over seventy members of staff on five different sites. My responsibilities involved engaging and training and developing the activities of members of staff and integrating them into the daily business of the company, including workshops, group activities and focused specialised training.

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I then moved to a role as manager of a city centre Arts Centre, involved in staging exhibitions, displays, activities, workshops etc. for adults and children: my responsibilities also included managing a small on-site restaurant as well as occasional evening functions. The centre became a recognised meeting place for those with arts-related interests.

From here I was appointed as Assistant Visitors' Officer at The British Council office in Manchester, organising and facilitating social, educational and professional visits in the area for guests of The British Council, the cultural wing of the Foreign Office. This involved setting up of appointments and timetables for visitors from across the world. My knowledge of languages, cultures etc. and my ability to relate to a wide range of educated professionals together with my highly developed communication skills made this position a good 'match' for me.

After some time working in Manchester, I looked for work again in the publishing industry and started work for a London-based company, representing the interests of a wide range of professional and academic publishers, mainly English or American with a smattering of European companies thrown into the mix, at conferences around Europe.

With my good working knowledge of the Scandinavian languages and German, I became the 'go to' exhibition manager for exhibitions in these areas of Europe and so spent much time in these countries as well as in Poland, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, etc., driving a truck with books, computers and exhibition stands to the conference venues, building and setting up the stands followed by up to a week of face to face marketing and selling to conference delegates.

On taking early retirement from university teaching in Manchester, my wife and I agreed to divorce, amicably, and she returned to Germany to continue her academic career. At this point, I had taken part in a two-year part-time evening Drama Course at Bradford Playhouse, in order to practically develop my forever latent interest in theatre.

Ultimately, half way through the second year of the course, our course director announced he was moving to a teaching role in Wales and was looking for somebody to run the Theatre School for children and adults and he seemed to think that I was ideal for the role (quote "you're a pushy arrogant little sod with a passion for theatre, for education and for people" (!)). I was amazed, as I had no specific teaching experience, little practical experience of theatre although perhaps in the other respects he had a point. As Studio Director I set up our rehearsal room as a small-scale Studio theatre, developed a whole programme of performances which I produced, directed and promoted and this enabled me to provide our students, children and adults, with a rich mix of theatrical opportunities over a period of fourteen years. To save on royalty payments, we began to improvise and write our own pieces of theatre which we then performed as part of our Studio Theatre programme.

One of the students from our adult drama course was Gail, who was completing a drama foundation course in Harrogate and was then hoping to go to drama school to do a three-year university course in Drama Studies at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle: this she did successfully, achieving a 2-1 degree. We developed, over a period of time, a close

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personal and working relationship in drama and writing. This period largely precluded or wrapped around my time doing exhibition work for publishers.

From taking on the Studio Director and Theatre School Director roles, I had the enormous advantage of support and assistance from Gail, again wrapped around HER other activities and her studies. Without her I could certainly not have achieved all the great experiences we provided for our students and audiences: and, guess what, after over 30 years of knowing each other, we're still together and hopefully still moving forward!

I left my role managing conference exhibitions as Gail faced the final stages of a Counselling Course she was pursuing, together with working full time in mental health and also working as a part-time tutor at a local theatre school: she needed my support at home rather than from the other side of Europe.

I secured a role as a co-ordinator with a locally based publisher of social history books, marketing and promoting titles across the country.

Later, with the company under new ownership, I was invited to return in a similar role plus the opportunity to research and write some of the books a task, I felt confident to pursue (four books published): I was also writing music and theatre reviews for the local newspaper, the Halifax Courier and involved in freelance journalism for a variety of publications, including Northern Star, Daily Telegraph and Leeds Student Paper and completed a two-year university Certificate Course in Community Participation at Leeds Metropolitan University and an Introduction to Teaching course at Calderdale College.

I worked for several years as a Training Advisor for various locally based training companies, working largely with long-term unemployed adults including liaison with local Job Centre Plus courses and enjoying teaching, training and sharing my vast experience of educating people at all levels.

In recent years, I have worked in a voluntary capacity for the Talking Newspaper for the Blind, as an editor and reader. I am still looking to access more freelance writing work, as and when offered, but look back on my life with good and warm memories as well as a desire to continue using my own life experience to enhance the lives of others where I am able.

After 32 years, Gail and I are still together, having worked often on theatre and writing projects in this time: I owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for her love and support and professional dedication over three decades and for continuing to put up with me, day in day out.

We are, of course, looking forward to pursuing 'the lost years' with my son and granddaughter and continuing with our various written contributions wherever possible. So, many thanks to Dean!

I hope you have enjoyed the journey and feel encouraged and empowered by it – thank you for keeping me company!

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IS THERE IS A ROLE FOR RELIGION IN A MODERN SOCIETY?



Patricia Green

Religion: What it means to me! Organisational congregation, who believe in love and peace. All societies must manage their roles through prayer, meditation – anything can be achieved if you believe.

In modern society, religions have to adapt to new structures which become the foundation that has already been laid in The Bible. We must also begin to understand our cultural differences and way of life – enabling us to discover new

ways of reasoning. However, we may not always agree with others' points of view. Therefore, listening to each other is essential and we must sit down and discuss in an agreeable manner.

So, I think there is a role for religion in a modern society and that it will definitely help achieve a world of love and peace.

Robert Williams

Religion was created by humans in powerful roles to control the masses. In many ways the True Teachings of those that came and taught from an enlightened point, Jesus, Buddha and Mohammed to name the top three have taken religion and skewed it to provide control over folk. This has been seen in the Catholic Church, in the Muslim world where Islamic teaching has been skewed and to a lesser extent in the Buddhist World. Buddhist teachings are not about control of people and impacting society. Nevertheless, the Buddhist Religious Doctrine still has some mechanisms of Control.

The only religion that potentially has little control because it encompasses all other religions is Hinduism.

A religion that is flexible and tolerant has a role because the organised structure can provide support and some religions have turned parts of themselves into movements of great importance that help many individuals, Christian Aid would be one and Khalsa Aid another. In this way religion has a role. Also providing support to those who are vulnerable and struggling is important and to do this without indoctrination is an important role in the modern day, many churches in the UK provide support to the needy through various forms.

The traditional view of Religion as being the direct voice of the Word of God is being diluted by scientific discoveries, such as quantum physics, plus the mass amount of communication that has become apparent in the 20th Century. Enabling teachings from many sources to be spread to many individuals and so widening world views. Such individual viewpoints are no longer being manipulated by the church and religion as they were in pre-industrial society.

To conclude, yes Religion still has a role but that role is nowhere near as significant as it was a few hundred years ago.

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Graham Townsend

I think there is always room in society for people to have beliefs, whether they be religious or otherwise.

I was brought up to believe in God and went to a Church of England primary school, but I have never classed myself as religious and have only really gone to church for weddings, christenings or funerals during my adult life.

Some religions seem to be a little antiquated but even if they seem out-dated, the people who hold beliefs consistent with those religions are entitled to do so. I do have an issue with those who try to force their views on to others. Also, religion and politics don't mix, again have your opinion but don't use any elevated position you may have within your religion to influence the public.

I have noticed, on the rare occasion when I have seen Songs of Praise on TV, that modern hymns are being sung so I suppose some efforts are being made to bring religion up to date. So yes, everyone to their own when it comes to religion.

Ruth Minich

Yes! There is a role both for personal religion and organised religion in modern society. Religion helped create modern society - schooling, the printing press, music and art, charities such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent, St. John Ambulance, National Children's Home, Samaritans, Salvation Army, World Vision, the list is endless. Hospitals began with religious people; wherever there is tragedy, famine, poverty we find that religious organisations of all faiths are there working to help.

Religion gives us inspiration and faith in outcomes, it challenges us to reach out beyond ourselves with a belief that anything is achievable when we rely not on our own strength but on a power that is supernatural. When this is harnessed into an organised structure it is world changing.

Having a personal faith is essential for my own wellbeing. Having a living spirit within me comforting, challenging and prompting me to do better, to put others first and to remember that there is always a new day tomorrow, with constant promise of better to come. I can draw from a superior strength and not rely on my own poor efforts. Study, prayer and meditation, meeting and talking with friends who share my beliefs and my journey is even more strengthening.

Many speak about the wrongs that have been done in the name of religion and this is true - we are human and many humans are sadly misguided, selfish and yes -wicked, using religion for their own ends. Crimes are committed in the name of many philosophies and political regimes too, this is no reason to dismiss religion.

Seek and you will find, ask and the door will be opened to you. I lived as an atheist for many years and now know that by shutting off my spiritual life I had closed down a vital part of my being; yes, I had good health and intellect, I had goodness and love but I didn't have this amazing life within myself. I have many very good friends who are not religious in the

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slightest way and they are good, excellent, loving and generous people, but I cannot describe this reality to them, it has to be experienced first-hand and people have to want to be open to receiving it.

I am talking specifically about Christianity but I would not decry another religion, I simply know that the holy spirit lives inside of me and guides me through this (sometimes) crazy modern life.

There has to be a place for any religion that fosters love of oneself, of others, and of the whole world in all its forms; religion that inspires giving, creativity and joy, respect for all, one that teaches us to live lightly on the planet, not to amass wealth but to share, and a religion that gives us freedom to explore and still be ourselves, exactly how God made us.

GET ON YOUR BIKE!



Written by Francis Tait

Did you know?

During the Coronavirus lockdown 1.3 million Brits bought a bicycle. The U.K. Government recommended the avoidance of public transport during this time. Perhaps, this may have resulted in one of the reasons for the increasing sales of the bicycle during the lockdown.

However, it was the same picture around the world. During lockdown, bicycle retailers were considered 'essential businesses' and not surprisingly many shops struggled to keep up with the demand of sales.

Many individuals found themselves with no gym facilities to visit and perhaps purchasing a bicycle was an appealing option of exercise. Of course, lockdown brought the 'empty roads' making this an opportunity for the cyclist and a healthy way to move around safely.

So what are the benefits of cycling?

- . It offers a great workout to keep active
- . It offers low impact aerobic exercise
- . It may help to improve balance, co-ordination and posture
- . It may help to support both physical and mental wellbeing
- . It may support in developing concentration

We may consider that we are now in the 'cycling moment' because throughout the difficulties incurred by lockdown, it was the bike that geared up and showed us the 'power of pedalling'.

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Purchasing a bike today is not an easy task. The enthusiast to the novice cyclist is faced with countless options, the number of gears, the weight of the frame, the shape of the frame, the shape of the seat and of course the purpose of the bike. Is the bike going to be used for city roads, dirt tracks or mountain riding? All of these choices have to be taken into account for the perfect ideal bicycle.

But all these choices were very different to that of days gone by! There were many people who played a part in the history of our well-loved bicycle. These are just some of the people who played their part in the evolution of the bicycle.

In 1817, Karl Von Drais made the basis for today's bicycle with the 'Laufmaschine', which was a running machine. This was a wooden two wheeled bicycle. The driver of this machine had to reach their legs to the ground to propel themselves forward by either walking or running. This was due to the lack of pedals, brakes and a chain.

The 'Laufmaschine' was updated by the 'Dandy Horse' - it was a commercially successful machine designed by Von Drais. Again, the design did not have the mechanisms of pedals, brakes or a chain but the driver was able to sit on a seat. Once again, the driver was required to either run or walk to maintain speed.

In the 1860's pedals first appeared on the bicycle. This was the creation of Pierre Michaux, Pierre Lallement and the Oliver Brothers. This was thought of as the modern bicycle. It was named the 'bone shaker'. A very apt description of what occurred to the driver, when the bicycle was being ridden.

In 1885, John Kemp Starley perhaps created an important moment in the history of the bicycle by his equal size wheels in addition to a chain drive. This bike was known as the 'safety bicycle'. Although this bicycle did not have brakes or tyres the development of these crucial features followed shortly. This bicycle formed the basic template for the modern bicycle.

Now, in 2020, the year which has been heralded 'The Golden Age for cycling', lockdown may be easing but perhaps social distancing may remain and public transport may not return to the 'norm' as we once knew for some time. So, the bicycle can now be seen as an essential 'tool of travel' in addition to reducing the carbon footprint.

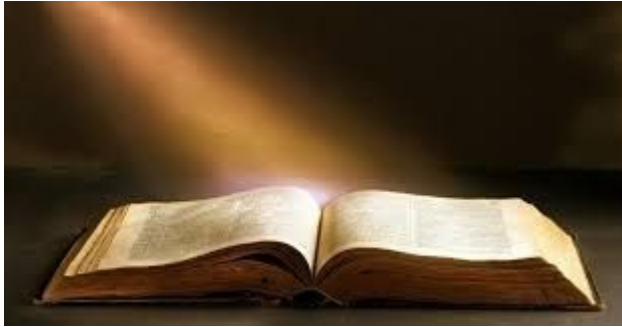
It was the politician Norman Tebbit in 1981 with his famous speech who told the nation to 'Get on your Bike' in connection to unemployment, little did we know nearly 40 years later in 2020 we would be once again 'Getting on our Bikes' with regards to a pandemic.

So the bicycle has become an important form of transport for today and of course it brings the joys of not having to fight for the ever diminishing parking spaces in crowded areas!

References:

Cycling Weekly	History.com
Economist	Norman Tebbit 1981
Live Science	Health line

BIBLE TALK



Sent in by Peter Smith

John 6.29

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a ghost

does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, he said to them, "Have you any food here?"

So, they gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb.

And he took it and ate in their presence.

Luke 24:38-43 (from NKJV)

Jesus came to his disciples after he rose from the dead.

John 6.29

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth".

Deuteronomy 14:2 (NKJV)

This was spoken to the Children of Israel, about to enter the promised land. But it also speaks to everyone who has believed in Jesus since he rose from the dead.

The winner of our recent writing competition for children:

THE WOODS

Written by Bryony Gale (Age 10)



As I walk through the woods, in the distance, I see a path that leads into a mysterious and magical place. There are trees everywhere, beautiful, green trees. As I walk through, I smell the wonderful scent of nature and wilderness.

Leaves fall down on to the ground gracefully and I feel a smile appear on my face. I hear birds chirping and it fills me with happiness and joy. I feel like I could stay here forever. As I run, I feel

rocks and bumps on the path push up against my feet. My mind clears and I feel I can be free.

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The amazing sound of leaves rustling and birds chirping together makes me feel calm. I see little brown twigs that have fallen off of trees on the ground. My eyes are set on the wonderful colours of these enchanting woods. I feel amazed as I see the birds flying around playing peacefully together. As I walk through, I see the bright coloured leaves on the big trees that reach the beautiful blue sky. As I gaze at the wonderful flowers, I see lovely butterflies and bees flying, fluttering and buzzing around them. It is a beautiful sight as you walk through the woods and you gaze at the wonderful view of the green trees and the light of the sun.

PONTEFRACT



If you fancy a flutter at the races or would like to seek out a poltergeist, then Pontefract (known jokingly to locals as Ponte Carlo) might well be a good town for you to visit.

The town of Pontefract is steeped in history and its motto: *Post mortem patris pro filio* means: After the death of the father, support the son, which is a reference to the English Civil War Royalist sympathies.

According to the 2011 Census, Pontefract had a population of 30,881 and the town is one of five towns in the metropolitan borough of the City of Wakefield.

Today, Pontefract is still a market town (since the Middle Ages) and it is well connected by rail and by bus to places like: Leeds, Wakefield, Goole, Castleford, York and Sheffield with an adequate bus station and three handy railway stations i.e. Pontefract Baghill, Pontefract Monkhill and Pontefract Tanshelf.

Interestingly, Pontefract once held the British record for the town with the most pubs per square mile, and some of these pubs in the town centre still survive.

The deep sandy soil in the area meant liquorice could be successfully grown, and thus, the popular and famous Pontefract Cakes have been produced in the town for many years. Unfortunately, the liquorice plant is no longer grown there although there is usually a liquorice festival held every year.

Education is well-provided for in the town with the existence of King's School and Carleton Community High School as well as there being New College which is a popular sixth form college.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, if you like a bit of supernatural excitement, then you could visit Chequerfield Estate which contains a house that is said to be haunted by The Black Monk of Pontefract.

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A local mural artist named Rachel List recently came to the notice of the national press through her artistic tribute to key workers and the NHS during the Coronavirus outbreak, and helped to put the town again on the national map.

It is true that the coal industry used to provide much employment in the Pontefract area, but the last colliery, The Prince of Wales, sadly closed in 2002.

If you consider yourself to be sporty, the town would suit you as there is the excellent racecourse, various amateur teams like Pontefract Collieries F.C. and of course the famous local rugby league club Featherstone Rovers.

The history of Pontefract is fascinating and at the end of the 11th century it consisted of two separate localities: Tanshelf and Kirkby, with Ilbert de Lacy becoming the owner of Tanshelf after the Norman conquest in 1066. A wooden motte and bailey castle were initially constructed, then later rebuilt in stone, with the de Lacys living there until the death of Alice de Lacy in 1348.

Significantly, King Richard II was murdered at the castle in 1400, but no one really knows how.

During the English Civil War, between 1648-9, the castle was laid under siege three times by Oliver Cromwell and this left the town “impoverished and depopulated”. Then in March 1649, Pontefract inhabitants petitioned for the castle to be demolished to deter a fourth and potentially devastating siege. This happened in April 1649, leaving the ruins that people can visit today.

Today the historic Pontefract barracks still are the home of The Territorial Army, Army Cadets, Air Training Corps and a Rifles Regiment Recruitment team.

So, if you are in West Yorkshire and at a loose end, why not spend a day in the interesting and historic town of Pontefract – you never know, you may even be lucky on the horses!

* With a lot of help from Wikipedia

You Could Advertise Here

MISSING THE POINT!



Written by Derek Greenwood

As we hit another obstacle to opening up more of the familiar aspects of our life here in ‘the North’, one is bound to observe, yet again, the underwhelming response of the UK government of the day.

Not only underwhelming but confusing, unfocused and with little or no context in such a

way that the public will find it difficult to know what they can do and what they should do to ensure they protect themselves and those around them.

Men, in particular, seem variously to be having difficulty in observing the rules we DO know about. Surely it cannot just be a casual arrogance (or ignorance if you prefer) which persuades, in particular, younger men to adopt a ‘nothing to do with me mate’ attitude allowing them to continue their generally cavalier attitude towards issues of health and safety.

For the sake of short-term inconvenience, there are many who still refuse to adopt simple safety procedures, for example, saying that they can’t breathe properly wearing a mask. I am a severe asthmatic, using Ventolin and Steroid inhalers having been diagnosed fifty-four years ago and provided I use my prescribed medication as and when I need it, I do not have obvious difficulties breathing whilst wearing a mask. Doctors have regularly commented about this in the media and agree that there should not be problems.

Do some men think it is demeaning to wear a mask or maybe they think of it as a weakness, non-macho as it were, something that might undermine their dominant and superior position in life generally? Maybe – ridiculous you might say, but some men do have severe hang-ups that encourage them NOT to talk about ‘embarrassing issues’ that could suggest they are not ‘on top’ of their own decision making.

Let’s hope those with a more realistic and workable view of daily life which encourages us to be generous when considering our fellow humans, male and female, convinces all ‘the others in our midst’ in order to improve the chances of avoiding falling prey to this dangerous virus: **STAY SAFE AND THINK OF OTHERS.**

You Could Advertise Here

BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



Orangutans:

Orangutans consist of three species of great apes that are native to Indonesia and Malaysia. They can be found in the rain forests of Borneo and Sumatra and used to be found throughout East Asia and South China during the Pleistocene period. The ancestors of the sub-family Ponginae split from the ape-line in Africa 15.7 to 19.3 million years ago.

Orangutans spend a large proportion of their time in trees and are the most solitary of the great apes. Their diet is composed of fruit but they will also eat vegetation, bark, honey, insects and bird's eggs. In captivity and the wild they can live for over 30 years.

The orangutans are reputed to be the most intelligent primates and use a variety of tools to construct elaborate sleeping nests made from branches and foliage. They occasionally enter grasslands, cultivated fields, young forest and shallow lakes and most of their time is spent feeding, resting and travelling.

Orangutans are considered to be an endangered species.

Ref. Wikipedia

MORE OF JUNE'S LOVELY RECIPES



Potato Drop Scones

Ingredients:

1lb 2 oz large potatoes (peeled and cut into small chunks)
1 ½ teaspoons of gluten-free baking powder
2 eggs
3 Fl oz of milk
Vegetable oil for frying
Salt and black pepper

Method:

Cook the potatoes in a pan of salted water for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain well, return to the pan and mash until smooth. Leave to cool slightly. Beat in the baking powder, eggs, milk and a little seasoning and continue to beat until everything is evenly combined. Heat a little oil in a heavy-based frying pan. Drop heaped dessertspoons of the mixture into the pan

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spacing them slightly apart. Fry for 3-4 minutes turning once, until golden. Transfer to a serving plate and keep warm while frying the remainder of the mixture.

Serve warm instead of toast with your favourite cooked breakfast.



Hash Breakfast

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons of olive oil
1 chopped onion
1lb of cubed, cooked potatoes
11 ½ oz tin of corned beef, roughly chopped
Dash of Worcester sauce
4 eggs

Black pepper
Chopped parsley (to garnish)
Smoked paprika (to garnish)

Method:

Heat half the oil in a large frying pan, add the onion and potatoes and fry for 5-6 minutes or until the potatoes are golden and the onions are softened. Stir in the corned beef and season well with pepper and Worcester sauce. Continue to fry for 2-3 minutes. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan and fry the eggs. Spoon the hash onto 4 serving plates, top each with a fried egg and served sprinkled with chopped parsley and a little smoked paprika to garnish.



Seville Orange Marmalade

Ingredients:

2 lbs of oranges (approx.)
1 lemon
4 pints of water
4lbs of preserving crystals

Method:

Wash and shred the fruit, put into a basin with cold water and leave overnight. Put it into a pan and bring it slowly to the boil. Simmer until the peel is soft and the contents of the pan are reduced by half after about 1 ½ hours. Add sugar, stir till dissolved and boil rapidly until a state of setting is obtained. Cool a little then pot and cover as usual.

Here is the winner of our recent short story competition for adults:

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Written by Derek Greenwood



The year was 1999, a time for looking forward. It just seemed a logical way to approach a new millennium, positively and with momentum.

Mina had somehow fastened onto the idea that she should be expecting more of herself. She knew she felt optimistic and just needed that last shot of adrenalin to light the fuse.

She had travelled to Edinburgh two days ago, excited at the prospect of a few days, relative independence: not that this was all good. Having spent the last three years completing her university course, Mina still had not become accustomed to time to herself, what to do with it and how to organise it. She had always thrived on the company and social interaction with her friends and fellow students to the extent that she had barely had time to contemplate the possibility that having finished her studies she might need to start making plans for herself. It had, sort of, crossed her mind at odd times, just before going to sleep for instance, standing in a queue at the baker's shop – STOP she thought, she really did need to keep control, keep some sanity.

The cafe she had found was just twenty minutes from the small hotel she had picked off the internet and had a small outside area out front. She had found her favourite table on her last visit – after all, there were only five of them. Mina had booked her return rail ticket from Leeds on the strength of her old student friend Alison having said a month ago “come and visit anytime”. When eventually she got through to Alison the response was electronic, brief, impersonal and unhelpful: the voice on the answerphone told her that Alison was on holiday and would be back in a fortnight. Her initial reaction was to get a refund on her ticket to Edinburgh and work out something else to do for the next week or so: but then again, she knew Edinburgh well as a result of treating herself to the Fringe Festival over the last two years: a very different place outside Festival time but still user-friendly in most ways and full of interesting people.

After only two days she already felt different, released, independent and somehow elated! Mina ordered another cappuccino and settled herself in her seat, looking around at her immediate surroundings. Allowing her thoughts to wander for a few minutes, she then picked up her copy of The Guardian. One thing she enjoyed every day was catching up on the world, but on her own terms and in her own time.

The sun was warm, the natural bustle of the city not unpleasant and Mina enjoyed being part of something but also able to detach herself as and when she pleased. It really was her sort of café, smiling, animated faces contributing to a sense of well-being for all and sundry. Time for another coffee she thought, sauntering to the counter to place her order. She felt the recent focus and burden of her studies beginning to fall from her shoulders and realised that she was

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starting to think of herself, in her own little bubble and what she might do for the rest of her time in Edinburgh. As her mind tried to move to possible activities for the evening, she noticed a young woman of roughly her age making her way into the outdoor seating area. As she approached Mina's table, her face broke into a warm and unconditional smile.

"Are these seats taken?" she asked in a soft, gentle local accent. She was tall, elegant, casually turned out in calf-length navy shorts and a fashionably baggy white cotton top.

"No" said Mina, smiling back at the woman in what she hoped was a welcoming gesture. The woman smiled her thank you and sat herself down opposite Mina, immediately taking a long gulp of her coffee and relaxing back into her chair.

"I really needed that!" she said. "I find coffee so confusing. Sip a little and it seems to help you relax and yet it also sharpens and revives you. I know I drink too much of it, real coffee that is. It's like I'm using it as an antidote to, I don't know, falling asleep, doing something which requires mental effort. How about you? Do you consider yourself an addict?" She leaned forwards towards Mina, her face splashed with a question mark and a fierce, yet friendly enquiring look.

"I suppose I'm probably not unlike yourself in terms of my relationship with coffee. Sometimes, I use it as a stimulant and sometimes as a relaxant. By the way, my name is Mina and I'm on holiday here for a week"

"I'm Molly" she said, offering her hand "and I'm local. What do you do? I mean work wise"

"I've just finished my University degree at Leeds: English and English literature and decided to come up here for a week to stay with a former student friend, before, that is, she decided to rush off to foreign parts for a fortnight. I'd bought my rail ticket so just booked a hotel room – I like Edinburgh a lot and so it wasn't a hard decision to make and besides my mum thought it would be good for me"

"That's sweet that your mum thought it would be good for you and also that you actually took her advice"

"Yes, we're actually very close, close friends in fact: I sometimes even forget she's my mum. My Dad passed away over twenty years ago, so my sister and I have tried to fill the hole, in some respects, that suddenly appeared. I was only three when he died so my memories of him are few but very special, very personal. My sister, Sara and I were very loved by him. which is probably why, although we were both very young when he died, we remember his love quite profoundly – also because our mum has also missed him really badly. We all live large parts of our lives as if he is still there – you know, sometimes before we decide what to do in a particular situation, we try and imagine how he would have dealt with it. I think of it as a cocoon of love, respect and guidance that I really wouldn't want to be without"

"Wow, how wonderful! You tell it so well that I totally believe you - I'm absolutely in awe of you!" said Molly, smiling earnestly across the table at Mina, who, in response, felt almost overwhelmed and, at once unaccountably happy at Molly's comments.

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“My mum often gives me good advice. We’ve always been close and talk a lot to each other: she really is my best friend”

Molly looked thoughtful and a little mesmerised by the conversation.

“I suppose I get on well with my mum, most of the time” Molly said. “She’s not big on words but is certainly a big softy. My brother’s always trying to get a rise out of her but can be a real pain in the arse a lot of the time. He always says he doesn’t have a lot of time for women but, sadly, the feeling is probably mutual”

Molly rolled her eyes at this and Mina was sure she understood.

Two hours later, and they were snuggled comfortably in their seats: Molly had moved her chair round the corner of the table and so had moved physically and emotionally closer to Mina. They had covered large chunks of each other’s lives, found things in common that amazed both of them.

By 6 o’clock they had begun to think and talk about where they could go for a meal: they already both felt an unconditional closeness from having stepped, by chance, into the intimacy of each other’s lives.

Molly suggested a cosy little Italian restaurant just off the city centre, to which Mina readily agreed provided she could pop by her hotel to shower and change. They parted on Princes Street, arms around each other, with tears welling in their eyes. They agreed to meet at 7.30 at The Scott Monument on Princes Street and waved happily as they parted, for the time being.

As she selected clothes for the evening from the wheelie case she had brought with her from home, Mina realised how carefully she was choosing her outfit, not in the sense of wanting to outdo Molly and her outfit, but feeling she wanted to wear something that Molly would appreciate: she had only known Molly for half a day, yet she felt so comfortable with her – Molly was already important to her. She smiled happily to herself, almost breathless with joy and anticipation of the evening ahead.

Molly rushed into her small flat, reached for her phone and called her Mum to tell her about her day so far. “I’ve met this really lovely girl in town today and we’re going out on the town together tonight – just wanted to let you know”.

“She must be nice if you already need to call and give me an update before 7!”

“Well, like I said, she is really lovely so I thought you ought to know” said Molly

“Ok, ok – I’m really pleased – but you take care and have a good night”

“We will, we will: what are you doing tonight?”

She could hear her Mum considering her response: “Probably going out with Lynne, what else?”

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“Well make sure you go somewhere that you can enjoy, not just Lynne – ok?” said Molly, knowing her mum’s tendency to give in to others’ demands. “I’ll ring you tomorrow around lunchtime: have a good one”

As she made her way back down to Princes Street, she realised she was almost unbearably excited. As she turned onto Princes Street, she immediately could see that Mina was already sitting on the steps at the edge of the monument.

As the smile broke on Mina’s face. She saw Molly look up, leap to her feet and run towards her. After a smothering embrace, Molly planted a warm wet kiss on Mina’s mouth: shocked and thrilled Mina almost dissolved in her own heat and excitement. Hand in hand they almost ran down the street.

Molly had chosen well, the restaurant, small and family-run had a natural intimacy for anyone who strayed across its entrance. The food was outstanding, balanced by subtle guitar-based music and almost invisible, but very attentive, service. By 9.30, they had ventured into almost every corner of each other’s lives, constantly willing each other on through every tale, every incident, enjoying all the points of contact as they presented themselves.

From the restaurant, after fond goodbyes and promises to return, they sauntered away to two of Molly’s favourite bars, both respectably quiet and unobtrusive.

Chatting still to each other as the clock on the wall moved inexorably towards the end of a wonderful day, both girls slipped quietly onto the street, still full of local nightlife.

After walking for twenty yards, arms around each other, they stopped and faced each other:

“Promise me” Molly said, “you’ve nothing planned for the rest of the week – please, please!”

“Only one thing I can think of” said Mina, the gentlest of smiles spreading across her face, “spending it with you!”

They kissed with passion before sauntering into the night, together.

They awoke late, both blinking in the sunlight fighting its way through the blinds. Sleep had eventually come to them, long into the night and only when they allowed it to intrude on their closeness.

Neither wanted the rest of the world to compromise the wonderful sensation of completeness and togetherness. In those first moments of wakefulness they both were hyper-aware of the unbelievably massive way they had changed their lives, their lives together. The future beckoned, but they both found it almost too massive to contemplate.

Three days later, and they both were convinced as to what they wanted and they both wanted the same thing. Now all they wanted to do was to include ALL their friends and family in their happiness.

They had slowly circumnavigated the city centre and all its history and had spent valuable time with Molly’s mum. Molly was so pleased that her mum had been as keen to meet and get to know Mina as Mina had to get to know Holly, Molly’s mum. Once the initial

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impression had been made in both directions, Molly's Mum had, of course, to get used to her daughter and Mina being an item, a very obvious, affectionate and touchy-feely item.

Holly had also had moments of passion and madness, particularly after her husband left her to bring up Molly and her brother Toby on her own. Resentment at being transformed overnight into a single parent family, with all the pressures financial and otherwise that were imposed upon had taxed Holly greatly for a year or so until she accepted that this was how it was and the realisation that it was now down to her. Most who knew her were surprisingly confident that Holly would face the consequences and move on, taking family with her, and this she had done with hardly an eyelid batted. Between Molly and her Mum was a strong, trusting and unconditionally positive respect for each other. This had enabled Holly to enjoy support and help from Molly in all respects including helping with Toby's up-bringing. Molly also relied on her mother for a sounding board as she independently sashayed her way towards adult life. On reaching fifteen, Molly had realised that her Mum needed her as much as she needed Holly and from then on, they had established a closeness and unanimity which was almost seamless.

At the same time, her mother had a modest concern that Molly spent more of her time with girlfriends until, that is, she laughed out loud at the thought that in traditional society mothers should be most concerned about their daughters' relationships with men rather than women. Holly was the last person to embrace her position as a traditionalist. Even as a teenager, before she was married, she had had her preoccupations with intelligent and sensitive women, often only refusing the final physical hurdle of commitment. They were both now well-adjusted to whatever emotional and physical life presented itself, together with the necessary sensitivity and tolerance.

She had to admit the introduction of Mina into their lives was an absolute positive for Holly and a little bit of her had already fallen in love with Mina.

For Mina, the week was racing away, the continuous drama of falling in love with Molly filling her every emotional moment and focusing her mind fully on the consequences and implications of the changes which undoubtedly would re-arrange great chunks of their lives. She smiled to herself and realised the tremor of excitement that kept pushing its way into her head and, indeed, her whole body.

Despite her relaxed attitude towards relationships, Mina occasionally found herself wondering if she was 'normal' in terms of enjoying the attention and company of attractive women as she did. She'd always enjoyed boys' company but had never really had the same sense of togetherness as she did with women. Yes, there it was in black and white, literally; the girls were women whilst the men were boys, often so immature, dishonest, without integrity, selfish, thoughtless, domineering, etc. etc. It was often a question of gender and the competitive nature of sexist attitudes and society's tolerance of the predominately male attitude and its impact on males and females. Mina felt surprised to find herself in such a conundrum, but nevertheless felt comfortable with her own emotional, physical and sexual desires and her wish to fulfil them – with Molly.

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By the following Saturday, Mina and Molly had spent hours enjoying each other's company and talking about their future, together. Mina had spoken at length to her mother and her sister and explained that she was intending to move north and would be bringing Molly down to Yorkshire to meet the family.

Mina was still taken aback at the pace of her life, all within two weeks and Molly was more amazed than she thought she could ever be.

But love found its way from a chance encounter to a future life of passion for two responsible adults.

ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



Questions:

- (1) Who played the lead female role in the 2006 film 'The Devil Wears Prada'?
- (2) What is the capital of the Orkney Islands?
- (3) Who is the most capped Scottish, male footballer?
- (4) What is the word for Wednesday in Spanish?
- (5) What is a ginnel?
- (6) How many strings are there on a bass guitar?
- (7) Who originally played lead guitar for the band 'Deep Purple'?
- (8) What is the capital of the state of Texas?
- (9) What is the most commonly used painkiller in the UK?
- (10) Where would you find the larynx?
- (11) What is the chemical symbol for magnesium?
- (12) What is a jockstrap used for?
- (13) What does a Birdie mean in golf?
- (14) What is the adjective for tired in French?
- (15) Who invented the pneumatic drill?
- (16) Where did the dance Salsa originate?
- (17) What is a cuticle?
- (18) Where would you find the city of La Paz?
- (19) What is 3 pm on the 24-hour clock?
- (20) What instrument did Pete Best briefly play for the Beatles?

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Answers:

(1) Meryl Streep (2) Kirkwall (3) Kenny Dalglish (4) Miercoles (5) A narrow passage between buildings; an alley (6) 4 (7) Ritchie Blackmore (8) Austin (9) Paracetamol (10) It is part of the respiratory system and is located between the pharynx and the trachea (11) Mg (12) It is an undergarment for protecting the testes and penis during cycling and contact sports (13) A score of minus 1 on any individual golf hole (14) fatigue (15) William McReavy (16) Cuba (17) It is a layer of clear skin located along the bottom of your finger or toe (18) Bolivia (19) 15:00 (20) Drums

Editor's Final Word: Thank you for reading this edition of my magazine. I hope there was something in it that you liked. If you would like to contribute/donate/advertise in the magazine, please contact us at: dean@fthm.org.uk Best wishes, Dean.