

## FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – June 2021. Edition No. 78.



Hello again. I hope you're alright. It seems we are not yet completely out of the woods Covid-wise, but my close friend Brenda and I are hoping to go to Torremolinos in September to celebrate her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday as like everyone else, we are ready for a holiday.

A charity called The Arch-Way Project, based in Halifax, has shown interest in getting involved with the magazine and we include some work from a member of their writers' group (Jason Wood) in this edition. Anyone can contribute to this publication as long as it is not homophobic, racist or sexist in nature by contacting us at: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk)

Best wishes, Dean.

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## MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



### **Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov**

You may think you will never experience romantic love again, but an ex-jail bird may relight your fire and show you that everyone deserves a second chance to fly. You may also be struggling to get back in touch with your creative side, but persevere as your juices will soon flow and submerge you in a pool of

creative pleasure. Consider replacing your old wig.

### **Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec**

This summer, someone who is as ugly as a contestant in a Miss Toad competition, will show you that looks are indeed only skin deep. You are occasionally very greedy and selfish so take new opportunities to develop the nicer side of your personality and you will find that more people are attracted to you. A good time to have your eyes tested. Eat more mushy peas.

### **Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan**

You seem to be one of those people who will put anything in their mouth, but maybe you should think more about food and how and where it is sourced. Maybe try and stop smoking if you want to attract that dishy person in your local fish market. A sexy, black woman may come into your life and teach you tricks you had never imagined existed before.

### **Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb**

Someone in an expensive car may make you feel jealous of them – but do they have your good health and the love that you have in your life? Now that summer is here, why not dance naked on your neighbour's lawn whilst they are out at church? A Polish cleaner may want to polish more than your ironware and leave you embarrassed by her cheeky offer.

### **Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar**

Money will come your way this month so do remember those genuine people who helped you when you were on your backside. Someone who you consider to be a bookworm will suddenly turn and leave you lost for words with their new antics. Your health may have been poor recently, but you will soon feel back to your dynamic best. Form an Abba tribute band.

### **Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr**

A lovely but boring person may offer you security - but is this what you really want? Now that there is more sun about, why not strip off in the park and feel liberated once more?

Reduce your large belly as people may think you're carrying six overweight babies. Stop being envious of other people as we must all walk in our own shoes. Be nice to the homeless.

### **Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May**

Your partner's constant slurping of their drinks may annoy you, but how would you feel if they weren't around to make any noise? A very good time to broaden your culinary experience by trying food from all around the world. Now you should take a long, hard look at yourself and realise that you can give more than just £2 a month to a charity. Do more.

### **Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun**

Now is a good time to treat yourself to something special as this last year or so has been difficult for all. You should also stop watching people doing things on TV and do things yourself like getting back in touch with nature. Two women in uniform will be nice to you without expecting you to stand to attention. Your worries and doubts will subside this month.

### **Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul**

An unexpected person will shower you with kindness and inspire you to do the same for others. A South American person will ask you to marry them so that they can stay in the country but is this what you really want to do? Consider moving house if living with your neighbours is impossible, but once you've gone don't look back in anger and keep going.

### **Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug**

Your reservoir of patience is running low but do continue to dilute your criticism of a friend's behaviour otherwise you may wash away their remaining confidence. Contact someone from your past with whom you once had a good relationship. Your work is like pulling teeth at the moment, but you will reach your goal as long as you polish your initial efforts. Buy a new tie.

### **Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep**

The death of a loved one may hit you hard, but help and support will come from an unexpected quarter. Also, a new person will come into your life and initial friendship will turn into the love you crave. You spend far too much time looking back to when you were young as the clock is ticking and our lives are finite. Change the shade of your lipstick.

### **Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct**

An email you receive will soon completely change your life if you react to it in a balanced and positive way. You may have a close shave with a man with a bushy moustache who wants to share more than a coffee with you. A friend may try and take financial advantage of you, but before you go off at the deep end, bear in mind their difficult circumstances.

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Have you read [Dean's Places](#) ??

## GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ



### Questions:

- (1) Billionaire entrepreneur Daniel Ek, best known for being the co-founder and CEO of music streaming service Spotify was born in which country?
- (2) "The Great Gatsby" is a 1925 novel by which American writer?
- (3) In which island country would you find the natural phenomenon "Seven Coloured Earths"?
- (4) "Always on My Mind" was a UK number 1 hit single in 1987 for which synth pop duo?
- (5) What appeared on marriage certificates in the UK for the first time in May 2021?
- (6) In what year was the state of Israel created?
- (7) What type of creature is a frogmouth?
- (8) Which multiplayer online battle arena game is one of the world's largest esports, it features teams such as Fnatic Rising, Galakticos and Solary?
- (9) Delia Derbyshire is best known for her 1963 arrangement of which UK television show theme tune?
- (10) In the well-known nautical phrase, if a person is preparing for a difficult situation they are said to be "battening down the...."?
- (11) Katheryn Elizabeth Hudson is the real name of which American singer?
- (12) Which bread product, originating in the Jewish communities of Poland, is traditionally shaped by hand into the form of a ring from yeasted wheat dough?
- (13) Who was the mother of James I of England (also James VI of Scotland)?
- (14) In which present-day country would you find the city of Tyre?
- (15) The stirrup, the smallest bone in humans, is found in which part of the body?
- (16) In which year did football's English Premier League start?
- (17) In which Indian city is the Taj Mahal located?
- (18) Brazilian singer Kim Sasabone was lead vocalist with which Dutch Eurodance music group, known for songs such as "Boom Boom Boom Boom" and "We're Going to Ibiza"?
- (19) Who defined boxing as a 'binary praxis of antagonistic reciprocity'?
- (20) Which revered English actor, born in May 1939 in Burnley, England, is known for his role as Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit trilogies?

### Answers

- (1) Sweden (2) F Scott Fitzgerald (3) Mauritius (4) Pet Shop Boys (5) Brides and Grooms Mothers Names (6) 1948 (7) Bird (8) League of Legends (9) Doctor Who (10) Hatches (11) Katy Perry (12) Bagel (13) Mary Stuart (aka Mary, Queen of Scots) (14) Lebanon (15) Ear (16) 1992 (17) Agra (18) Vengaboys (19) Jean-Paul Sartre (20) Sir Ian McKellen

## JUNE CHARLTON SHARES A BIT MORE ABOUT HER WORLD



Hello again. A month has passed since I wrote my last article and things seem to be improving now that the restrictions have been relaxed a little. We are now allowed to go and eat outside of cafes which is lovely after not being able to do so. Things in general do seem to have improved which is very good for everyone. We still go for a lot of walks which keep us reasonably fit and healthy. We're looking forward to going to Halifax to see our son – we love going to Halifax because it's

such a lovely place with plenty of good shops to patronise. There are more and more places opening up so it's quite reassuring and exciting!

Travel agents are also opening up and we've contacted a few hotels that we like to visit, but they are all booked up at the moment, so other people must have the same idea. At the moment, we are just visiting places like Northallerton and Bedale and local places like Langlands and Lumby which are big cafes.

The man across the road from us has been in hospital with Covid for about a month so he must be very ill – I don't really like bothering his wife to enquire about his welfare as we have never had much to do with them.

The weeks just seem to fly by and we are already in May. We went to Selby on Monday as we like to go there on that day as it's lovely visiting the abbey and seeing people we know – the street was really busy and more shops had opened. When we were in the abbey, we lit two candles for my son's best friend Brenda. All the market stall holders were shouting to attract people to their stalls. I noticed that the shoe stall and clothing stall seemed particularly busy and I said to one stall holder that it was nice to see them so busy, to which he replied that they'll never be able to make up for the money that they have lost during the pandemic. Hopefully, people will keep giving them their business and help them to get back on their feet.

It's nice now that the nights are getting lighter and it's been great to be able to sit out and sunbathe or read.

Fortunately, since I started this article, the man opposite has come out of hospital as we saw him walking with his wife this morning as we were returning from our walk.

Today is Friday, and we went to Castleford to do our usual shopping and it was good to see that there was a big queue waiting to go into Marks & Spencers. The market was also busy and it made me think that perhaps we will soon be back to leading a more normal life.



## DO YOU THINK THERE SHOULD BE A LEGAL LIMIT TO PERSONAL WEALTH?



### **Graham Townsend**

This is a very interesting question, one that I had not seriously considered until now. I think there are arguments both for and against having such a limit. Here are my opinions on the matter.

Firstly, the pros. Some people have what many would see as an obscene amount of personal wealth. Do those people actually need all that money? As the old saying goes “money is the root of all evil” - would a legal limit on wealth perhaps reduce that evil ever so slightly? Would it result in less conflict in the world? Money has sometimes been cited as the real reason behind conflicts, one that springs to mind is the situation over the years in Northern Ireland. A controversial idea perhaps and very difficult to prove. Digging a little deeper perhaps the issue is that sometimes money gets into the hands of the wrong people, however, that is being a little bit too subjective maybe.

Moving on to the cons. If someone works really hard and genuinely earns their wealth, why should they be restricted? They will feel they should be allowed to buy whatever they want if they can afford it. Does a restriction on the legal wealth of a person infringe on their basic human rights? The most important question is who gets to decide what the legal limit should be?

In an ideal world, this question probably should not even need asking. One thing is for sure, on a personal basis, I will never be in a situation where I have to worry about breaching such a limit as long as it wasn't set at a relatively low level!

### **Anonymous**

People who work hard to earn money should be allowed uncapped personal wealth, however, we are living in a self-entitled generation and the words (working hard to earn is somewhat a non-starter.) The internet and social media have taken over and has/is causing an epidemic of unemployment. We have lost a number of retail chains, not just due to covid but because of the way shopping habits have changed mainly by the younger generation and the older generations have had to adapt to the changes.

We now have a generation with new ways of making wealth who are called “Celebrities” who have become famous off the back of reality TV such as Love Island or apps like YouTube/TikTok etc. The list goes on.... These “Celebrities” are or are becoming self-made millionaires off the back of influencing/advertising products, which is/has dissolved the high-street shops and taken so many jobs away from the retail industry and TV advertising! These influencers endorse products whether they believe in the product or not! Some have gone as far as advertising non- starter pyramid schemes and illegal money making schemes. Some have shamelessly got their agents to suggest going to a restaurant and getting a free meal in order to gain publicity for the restaurant knowing full well that the hospitality

industry has suffered so much over the past year due to lockdown!

There is a bigger picture in terms of how personal wealth is earned. We are living amongst a self-entitled generation who constantly complain about child poverty. From personal experience, a lot of the younger generation I know, some are couples with children who have jobs, others are single parents with no earned income because they chose to have or keep having children or create health issues in order not to work and rely on the state, including those who chose to commit fraud by fleecing people who have earned or inherited their own personal wealth!

Some people who choose not to work are usually the ones who have a self-entitled attitude and think they are owed by hard working tax payers. They choose to receive anything for FREE and constantly complain about child poverty! If you look deeper into some of these households, the children have the latest clothes and footwear, computer software which includes tablets, PlayStation, and Xbox, a car in the household and occasional holidays abroad or within the UK!

On the other hand, you have couples with or without children who work very hard and are not allowed any help by the state if they earn 5p over the stated threshold but yet do not have the luxury of providing their families with the latest clothes and footwear etc.

People who are 55 years old and over, who have worked all or most of their adult lives are constantly being pushed to go out and earn until they drop dead to support a self-entitled generation! There is no system in this country or thought process to suggest, that this age group should be allowed a break from work if they choose to take one according to the amount of tax and national insurance contributed!

I do think there should be a cap in terms of what an individual has contributed in terms of tax and national insurance and based on age as to whether they should be forced out to work to pamper a self-entitled generation, including free loaders who have entered the UK to benefit from a free welfare system!

Overall, a cap should be introduced for certain industries based on how their WEALTH is being MADE including tax and national insurance - Age based - as opposed to work until you DROP/DIE!

Personally, I think the World has gone MAD!

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We are becoming increasing popular on the WWW so if you want anything published with the chance of cross linking then please [get in touch](#)

## NEWCASTLE



Newcastle initially grew from a Roman settlement called Pons Aelius which had a population of approximately 2,000. When the Romans left Britain in 410 A.D, Newcastle was absorbed by the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria and was known as Munuceaster (often modernised to

Monkchester) but, unfortunately, conflicts with the Danes in 867 almost destroyed the settlements along the River Tyne.

In 1080, following the Norman invasion of Britain, Robert Curthose (Son of William the Conqueror) built a wooden castle in Newcastle (because of its strategic position) which became known as Novum Castellum or New Castle. In 1087, the wooden structure was replaced by a stone one and was then once again rebuilt in 1172 during the reign of Henry II. Interestingly, Scots King William the Lion was locked up in the castle in 1174.

In the thirteenth century, a huge stone wall was erected around the town to prevent attacks from invaders during the Border War against Scotland. Then, in 1400, Henry IV separated Newcastle from the county of Northumberland and it became a county in its own right known as Newcastle upon Tyne. A new charter was also granted by Elizabeth I in 1589.

During the fourteenth century, the wool trade was the main contributor to Newcastle's economy, followed much later by coal mining and ship building. It is worth mentioning the Sandgate area of Newcastle, which is where keelmen and their families lived and worked and were responsible for the transference of coal from the river banks to the waiting colliers, for export to London and other places in the UK.

Unfortunately, over 7,000 of 20,000 inhabitants perished in the 1630s during the Plague which was devastating for Newcastle, and, tragically a further 53 people lost their lives in 1854 with the Great Fire of Newcastle and Gateshead.

A print industry thrived in the area in the eighteenth century and it also gained a reputation for producing excellent flint glass. On the third of June 1882, Newcastle became a city following St. Nicholas' Church becoming a cathedral.

Newcastle was very important during the Industrial Revolution boasting a great shipbuilding industry and a healthy, heavy engineering sector – which declined in the second part of the twentieth century. It was also one of the first cities in the world to be illuminated by electric lighting and also introduced such innovations as the safety lamp, electric light bulbs and the steam turbine.

In the twentieth century, electric trams ran on the streets of the city but these were gradually replaced by trolley buses from 1935, though these stopped running in 1950. As cars became popular, the roads in and around Newcastle were improved and Redheugh Bridge and Tyne Bridge were opened. The city's first art galleries were opened in the early part of that century (the Laing Art Gallery and Hatton Gallery) and two museums were also opened at this time: The Museum of Science and Industry and the John G Joicey Museum.



There was a big effort made from the 1920s to the 1970s to replace inner-city slums with council housing and a lot of private housing being built. And in the 1930s, Newcastle witnessed a record rise in unemployment. In addition, 141 people lost their lives during World War II air raids which also culminated in 587 injuries.

The second half of the twentieth century, saw the demise of coal mines, heavy industry and ship yards on the banks of the River Tyne which were partly replaced by the office, service and retail sectors over a period of years. Importantly, Newcastle University was founded in 1963 and a polytechnic in 1969 – which became Northumbria University in 1992.

Today, the city of Newcastle is the most populous in the North East of England and possesses mainly a medieval street layout with alleys or ‘chares’ which need to be accessed on foot. Much of the architecture was designed in the 1830s by Richard Grainger and John Dobson in a style that is called ‘Tyneside Classical’. Many of these buildings are now listed. People of this area are known as ‘Geordies’ and local delicacies are Pease Pudding and Stottie Cake.

Normally, Newcastle is a fabulous place to have a night out with many pubs, bars and nightclubs around the Bigg Market and the Quayside area of the city centre. There is also ‘The Pink Triangle’ on Times Square where many LGBT-friendly bars and clubs are to be found. You could also pay a visit to Chinatown or one of the many other excellent international restaurants in the city.

If you enjoy a trip to the theatre, Newcastle has many to offer like The Theatre Royal, The Live Theatre and The People’s Theatre. There are also annual fairs and festivals to consider attending such as the Hoppings funfair on the Town Moor, Newcastle Beer Festival and Newcastle Mela. The largest music venue is the Metro Radio Arena opened in 1995 and which seats 11,000 people. Some people may be interested in visiting one or more of the city’s interesting museums or galleries, or spending time in Leazes Park.

If you fancy a bit of retail therapy, then why not visit the shops on Northumberland Street or those on Grainger Street and also the area around Grey’s Monument?

Sport is very popular in the Newcastle area and the city boasts the great Newcastle United (not forgetting Newcastle United Women’s Football Club) as well as non-league clubs like Newcastle Benfield. There is also the rugby union team Newcastle Falcons and the rugby league team Newcastle Thunder. If you like Speedway, you could maybe pay a visit to Brough Park in Byker to watch the Newcastle Diamonds. It would be remiss of me not to mention the Great North Run which starts in Newcastle or the great horse racing at Gosforth Park.

So maybe a trip to Newcastle might be a good idea as the city has so much to offer the visitor. You can easily fly into the area at the Newcastle International Airport (situated at Woolsington), use the excellent bus services, Newcastle Railway Station or go via the very adequate road network.

Geordies are reputed to be a very friendly lot, so why not visit Newcastle and find out for yourself!

\* With a lot of help from Wikipedia

## ALBUM REVIEW BY GRAHAM TOWNSEND



**Album: Life by Misadventure**

**By: RAG'N'BONE MAN**

I purchased this album based on the reputation of the artist alongside the fact that I loved the song "Human" from his debut album of the same name.

This is his second album and like "Human" it has topped the UK Album charts, so he has a one hundred per cent record to date in that respect. This album has fifteen tracks with a running time of just over fifty-four minutes.

I have seen a comment elsewhere that this album is stripped back and I can totally understand that. There are times whilst listening to this that it seems like a case of one man and his guitar.

The tracks that stood out to me initially were "Anywhere Away from Here", a duet with Pink that has already been released as a single and "Crossfire". The opening track "Fireflies" has also grown on me after a few listens. The final track is a solo version of "Anywhere Away from Here", which is not bad at all but I prefer the duet with Pink. Maybe that is purely because I have become accustomed to hearing that version, you can judge for yourself when you have a listen.

The first single released from the album was track eight, "All You Ever Wanted", this is one of the more upbeat numbers on the album and you can see why it was selected as the lead single. For me there is a hint of George Ezra about this track.

One of the saddest songs is "Talking to Myself" which apparently is about Rag'n'Bone Man's recent divorce.

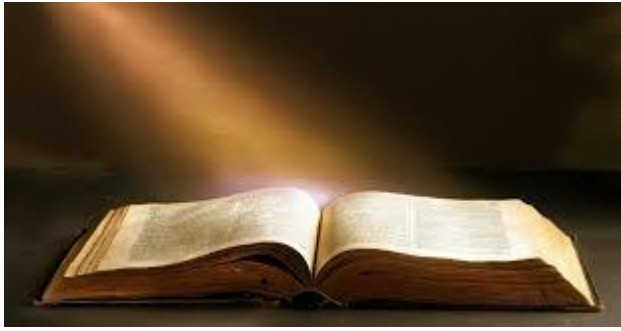
There are a couple of obvious quirks with the album. Firstly, the spoken opening to track ten, "Somewhere Along the Way", which I have grown to like, and secondly the close to track fourteen, "Old Habits", which appears to have ended and then continues after a short pause.

I can hear a similarity with Eric Clapton in "Somewhere Along the Way" but that might be down to the style more than the fact that he actually sounds like him. As an aside, there are various times whilst listening to the album that I can hear a bit of Cat Stevens about his vocals.

There is no doubt that Rory Charles Graham (his real name) is a very talented singer but it took me a few listens to get into this album. The album is more blues and soul orientated than pop music. If you like a good ballad or you like to sit and think, whilst listening to music, this is probably going to be your type of album, although there are a few more up-tempo tracks here. I think his existing fans will like the album, primarily because it mainly features the type of songs that I think they would expect from him.

MY STAR RATING = \*\*\*1/2 out of 5

## BIBLE TALK



**Sent in by Peter Smith**

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

**Matthew 6:7 (NKJV)**

Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see him, yet

believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

**1 Peter 1:8 (NKJV)**

Jesus is not interested in long prayers. What matters to him is what he sees in our hearts:

- do we trust him?
- do we see his love in what happens to us day by day?
- are we truly grateful for all that we have?

And as we go about our daily lives, it pleases him when quietly we talk to him and thank him.

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## BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



### Platypus

The platypus is a duck-billed semiaquatic, egg-laying mammal which is found mainly in Eastern Australia and Tasmania. The platypus is the only mammal that lays eggs in order to reproduce instead of giving birth to live young.

European naturalists were baffled by the animal when they first came across it although Aboriginal people of Australia used to hunt it for

food and for its fur, but it is now a protected species. Captive breeding programs however, have only limited success and although the platypus is now vulnerable to the effects of pollution, it is true to say that it is no longer under threat of extinction. It is now a legally protected species in all Australian states where it occurs and is only listed as an endangered species in South Australia. It even features on the reverse of the Australian twenty cent coin and is the animal emblem of New South Wales.

Although the size of the platypus differs from region to region, the average male is about twenty inches in length while the female is about seventeen inches. In captivity it has been known to live until seventeen years of age but in the wild they obviously die much younger.

It is an excellent swimmer and spends much of its time searching for food and interestingly, all four of its feet are webbed. It is a carnivore and feeds on worms, insect larvae, freshwater shrimp etc. The platypus uses cheek-pouches to carry prey to the surface where it can then devour it.

In the past, Aboriginal Australians believed the animal was a hybrid of a duck and water rat because of its physical attributes but now it is a respected and valued part of Australian wildlife.

Ref. Wikipedia

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## OPPRESSION

**Written by Jason Wood**

Chapter 1.

There was a young boy called James, he was eleven years old, thin and unkempt looking.

Two other boys approached him, one of the boys, whose name was Eric, accused James of fancying the teacher. James knew he was no match for these two bullies, "Leave me alone", he said. The other boy called James a 'puff'.

Suddenly Mr Morris, the religious studies teacher comes into view. Eric spits in James face and aggressively says, "You'll keep!"

Mr Morris looks at James and noticed he had wet himself. "He is disgusting!" Mr Morris says and orders James to go to the headmaster's office without delay.

When he gets there his mother, Marjorie is stood there, mouth opening and shutting like a fish. She asks why she had been called into school. The headmaster explains, "James has been having unnatural thoughts."

Marjorie said she wasn't surprised, spitting out saliva as she talked, "I always knew he was one of them" She smirked, "what do you suggest?"

Looking up at the ceiling she murmured to herself "Only God can save him now."

James tried telling the headmaster about the P.E. teacher, who had been touching him. The headmaster just looked at him in disgust.

"So, what is to be done about the matter?" asked Marjorie. "I'm going to pray for my son tonight, pray that Satan be banished".

"No amount of cleansing will rid the boy of this disgusting compulsion" the teacher replied. "I wonder how long it's been going on?" said Marjorie.

"There's something else I should have mentioned" said the headmaster coughing and looking over the brim of his glasses, "The boy was caught kissing a young lad."

"The disgusting little worm!" said his mother as she dragged James away by his ear. James started to protest but Marjorie cut him off saying "Shh! I'm going to save you before it's too late. You'll never have to sin again. Stay quiet and silence the devil"

His mother started going through his pockets. “What are these?!!” she screamed pulling out a packet of cigarettes. “Sin, sin, sin, again!”

“Stand in the corner!” She spat. “I want you to balance the Holy Bible on your head for two hours until Satan repents and I want you to repeat to yourself: I have sinned I will not succumb to these unnatural thoughts; I am stronger than you Satan!”

Later back at home James’ father walks in after an extremely bad day at work. Marjorie looked stressed as a stench of halitosis filled the room.

“What’s this crap you’re serving!” he said. A terrified Marjorie replies that it was all that she could find in the cupboard. James’ father is livid. “All you do is sit on your arse all day doing nothing!”, he knocks over the chair. “Pathetic bitch!”

“Don’t hit me” she said petrified. “I swear I’ll get a job.”

“I’m not eating this crap” said James’ father.

“I’ll run you a nice bath” said Marjorie as she scuttled out of the room.

The father confronts James “Son I hear you had a little accident at school today, I am deeply disgusted with you.” James was deeply terrified. “It won’t happen again” he said.

“Dead right” his father said. “Or I’ll cut it off.”

## Chapter 2.

Six years passes without much changing. Same house, same décor, the carpets crisp with mould and a strong smell of stale tobacco. James is in the bathroom shaving. He makes an excuse about meeting a girlfriend. His father is only too pleased with this. “Be back by eleven” he says. James gingerly closes the door behind him, relieved to be out of the hell hole that was his home. He starts to walk down the path and crosses over the road, two minutes later he is on the bus looking out of the window watching the world go by. James suddenly realises a boy on the bus is gazing at him intently. “You new in town?” the new boy says. “I haven’t seen you before. By the way I’m Henry - Henry with a H - everyone spells it with an E, I don’t know why. Where you off?” James panics “Oh to meet my girlfriend” he said. Henry smiles “She’s very lucky, do you know something? She’s a very lucky lady.”

James exited the bus with a mixture of apprehension and excitement. As he approached the church hall, he heard men’s voices talking and laughing. Finally, he plucked up the courage and goes in. A group of seven men looked up in surprise. One of the men looked lustfully at James, he was called Barry. “Hi gorgeous, you new in town?” he said. Another man Jon was also very welcoming and invited him to sit down. James sat down guardedly. “What’s your name?” asked Jon. James told a white lie, “Oh, Bernard.” James felt really awkward. He had visions of his mother with the Holy Bible mocking his sexuality. He always knew he was gay. His father would urinate on him to teach him a lesson.

“I have to go” James said in a raspy voice. “You must come again” said Jon “We’re here every Wednesday seven till nine, you’d be more than welcome. James had no intentions of going back. Barry appeared in the doorway “What you doing later? the smell of alcohol on Barry’s breath made James gip. “You can stay at mine tonight if you like I’ll pay you”. James knew he was in a dangerous situation but suddenly Henry appeared, “Leave him alone



he said he's my fella". Barry retaliated, "Thanks, what are you doing?" James said "I won't lie to you I'm on the game".

James gazed into Henry's deep blue beautiful eyes. He already knew he was smitten. They talked for hours but finally James said he had to get going.

"You don't have to go" Henry said. "I do" said James "I have an eleven o'clock curfew. James had a mixture of butterflies and apprehension. He knew he wanted Henry and longed to be engulfed in the beautiful smell of his aftershave.

James missed the last bus home and made it back by foot. He turned the key in the lock just as he crept upstairs, he heard his father cough. the light went on and James' father swore at him. James confidently replied "Isn't it a sin to swear?" He felt his father's fist hit his shoulder "You haven't been to see your girlfriend you dirty little ....".

James rushed past his father and raced up the steps. He shifted the wardrobe against the door to keep his father out. James didn't sleep at all that night. One thing was for sure, he found Henry amazingly attractive. He was determined to get away from his mother and father and thought maybe he could rent a bedsit in town.

Before he knew it, it was dawn. He opened the window and slipped out. Only then did he realise he'd left his mobile behind. "Damn!" he thought. but at least he'd escaped and he knew he wasn't going back. He heard something and realised it was his mobile phone, it was in his coat pocket after all. A missed call came up he didn't recognise the number but he decided to ring it anyway. "Hi" a voice answered. It was Henry. James now knew he was head over heels and he was going to tell Henry how he felt - life really was too short. A text came up "Meet me at the Merry England in an hour".

He was nearly half an hour late. Henry was nowhere to be seen. "Well, I've blown it" he thought. Just when he'd given up hope altogether, he heard a gentle voice say "James". He looked up and saw Henry beaming at him "Hi buddie" he said, "I almost gave up on you". They grabbed a bacon sandwich each and then Henry scooped James up in his arms.

He opened up to Henry. Details of all the verbal abuse he had endured spilled out. "You're safe with me" Henry said, "You don't ever have to go back to that, come and stay with me I've plenty of room". So that was that. Next day James ventured into town with one hundred pounds in his wallet. It was also Valentine's Day and he wanted to surprise Henry so he decided while he was in town to book the Chinese restaurant for that evening.

He was waiting for Henry to come home and sure enough he heard the front door squeaking as it opened. What James saw filled him with absolute horror, for standing in the doorway was his father, with a sinister look on his face. "You're coming home with me" he spat. "I know what you've been up to. Me and your mother have prayed to the Lord to save your soul"

"I'm not going anywhere with you" stammered James. "You've sinned boy". James made it to the door and slammed the door on his father's hand. Flinching in agony he shouted "I'll get you sinner!" James made it to the other side of the road, his father close behind.

Suddenly Henry appeared “Get off him” he shouted. His father tried to stuff the Holy Bible into his mouth. He felt sick as he choked on the pages. Henry tried desperately to get to him and ran across the road without looking. James looked on in horror as Henry was hit head on by a car which then sped off without stopping.

James cradled Henry in his arms. “Don’t leave me now” he said. There was no sign of life. “Look what you’ve done!” James shouted at his father “Are you satisfied now?! I’m not scared of you any more you’re nothing but a sick arrogant piece of work. You and mother can go to Hell!”. “There’s still a chance you can be saved,” said his father. ” I’m gay,” said James.

His father walked off when the ambulance arrived. James went with Henry in the ambulance “Please save him” James begged. We’ll do our best said the paramedic. On arrival at the hospital Henry was rushed into theatre. He had a bleed on the brain and the doctors had to relieve the pressure in his skull. In a daze James slotted a pound coin into the coffee machine.

He went and sat in the waiting room. The corridors were littered with doctors and nurses like a swarm of bees. After what seemed like an eternity Dr Rawlings appeared. “How is he?” stammered James. The doctor explained that Henry had a massive fracture to the skull which had caused internal bleeding. It was looking bleak.

Reality hit James hard in the face. It was Valentine’s Day and he could lose Henry. He wanted to hold his hand and say everything was going to be ok. Not long after the alarms went off and then came grave news. Henry had died at the age of just eighteen. Still nothing but a boy.

James felt rage against his mother and father for their lack of understanding and ignorance. He remembered the countless nights his father had abused him while his sister Madeline turned her back on him. She was now married with one child. James didn’t even know where she was living so there wasn’t much chance, he was going to see her again.

James booked himself into a bed and breakfast until he got himself sorted. As the days went by the anger subsided. He didn’t go to Henry’s funeral as his emotions were still all over the place.

Not long after James received the shocking news that his mother and father had split up and his mother was in a refuge for women until he got himself sorted. More details emerged of how her husband had tried to strangle her with a pair of tights because she’d disobeyed him.

A couple of days later James was having a coffee when a broken looking woman approached him, pulling her hood down. He thought she must be sleeping rough and was just about to fish around in his pocket for some change when he realised the woman was his mother.

“I have nothing to say to you” James said and started to turn away. But his mother held on to his arm. “Please, please, please listen to me” she said “Your father tried to suffocate me. I’m so sorry son, I was so terrified of him. I had to do what he said but I’m absolutely sick to the core, absolutely sickened for the way I’ve treated you.”

“This is just a ploy to get me home isn’t it mother?” James said. “I’m never coming home.”

“No, it isn’t” she replied “All the times I was nasty and brutal do you think I was proud of myself? I was knocking brandy back every night and I’m supposed to be religious; I’ve been

a disgrace to be quite honest love. I've come to terms with your sexuality and I love you to pieces. Please say you can forgive me".

Silence

And then James embraced his mother. He felt peace. There was no more tension.

Not long after James learnt his father had been suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. The diagnosis didn't shock James. He'd always known his father was a religious freak but he'd taken it too far. James's father had hung himself in prison. Was it remorse for his actions or had he been severely depressed? We will never know.

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## GRAHAM'S SPORTING CORNER



Welcome to the latest in a series of articles which aim to increase people's awareness of particular sports, their origins, their rules, popular events within that sport and much, much, more.

This month we are going to take a look at tennis:

Tennis is a racket sport. It is most commonly played by two individuals (singles) although, doubles (two players per team) is also very popular, especially in a social setting. The game is played on an area known as a tennis court. The court is marked out with lines.

The object of the game is to move the ball in a way that means your opponent is unable to return it, in a valid manner, and prevent them from scoring a point. The parts of the court in which a player needs to return the ball, to make it a valid return, vary slightly between singles matches and doubles matches. The main on court tennis match official is referred to as an umpire.

Tennis is governed by the International Tennis Federation (ITF). It is also an Olympic (and Paralympic) sport. The game is believed to have first been played in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was originally referred to as lawn tennis. This is as a result of its close association to other lawn games, such as bowls, croquet and an older racket sport, known as real tennis. It was in fact real tennis which people first used the term tennis in association with.

The rules of tennis have not changed a great deal in over 125 years. The main exceptions being the rule that the server had to have one foot on the ground, between 1908 and 1961, the introduction of tiebreaks in the 1970s and the adoption of electronic review technology, which was subsequently added to with the player challenge system. This system is known as

Hawk-Eye, it allows the players to query line decisions where they feel they need to dispute the allocation of a point.

There are four major professional tournaments played throughout the year. These tournaments are the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open. Collectively they are known as the Grand Slam events, and a player who wins all four tournaments in a calendar year, or each one consecutively, is said to have done the “Grand Slam”. If a player manages to win each of these tournaments at least once during their career, it is called a “Career Grand Slam”.

The Australian Open and the US Open are played on a hard-court surface. The French Open is played on a clay surface and Wimbledon is played on the more traditional natural grass court surface. There are singles and doubles competitions for both men and women at all these events, along with a mixed doubles tournament. The men’s matches are decided over the best of five sets, the women’s and mixed matches are decided over three sets.

Away from the major tournaments there are events held all over the world throughout the year. The Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) run the men’s world tour events and the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) run the women’s world tour events. They both allocate points for performances at these events to create individual world rankings. Points are also scored at the Grand Slam tournaments, the difference being that the ITF run those particular events.

The most successful male players in the history of tennis include Switzerland’s Roger Federer and Spain’s Rafael Nadal who have both won 20 Grand Slam singles titles, at the time of writing.

The most successful female players in the history of tennis include Australia’s Margaret Court, who 24 Grand Slam singles titles, Serena Williams from the USA, who has 23 Grand Slam singles titles and Germany’s Steffi Graf who won 22 Grand Slam singles titles.

I hope you have enjoyed this look at the sport of tennis.

Until next time...stay safe and be happy!

\* Written with some help from Wikipedia

PS – If you fancy a further sports fix, I record a weekly podcast, you can view it at - [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQAG\\_vzf\\_Qq0XIKczwd117Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQAG_vzf_Qq0XIKczwd117Q)

## MORE OF JUNE'S EXCITING RECIPES

### **Potato Crisp Pie**

Ingredients:

2 large waxy potatoes, sliced  
2 oz of butter or margarine  
1 skinned chicken breast fillet (about 6 oz)  
2 crushed garlic cloves  
4 sliced spring onions  
1 oz of flour  
¾ cup of dry white wine  
⅔ cup of double (heavy) cream  
8 oz of broccoli florets  
4 large, sliced tomatoes  
3 oz of sliced, Gruyere cheese  
1 cup of natural yoghurt  
⅓ cup of rolled, toasted oats

Method:

Cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a frying pan. Cut the chicken into strips and cook for 5 minutes, turning. Add the garlic and spring onions and cook for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the flour and cook for 1 minute. Gradually add the wine and cream. Bring to the boil, stirring then reduce the heat until the sauce is simmering. Then cook for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, blanch the broccoli in boiling water, drain and refresh in cold water. Place half of the potatoes in the base of a pie dish and top with half of the tomatoes and half of the broccoli. Spoon the chicken sauce on top and repeat with the layers in the same order once more. Arrange the Gruyere cheese on top and spoon over the yoghurt. Sprinkle with the oats and cook in a preheated oven at 200 C or 400 or gas mark 6 for 25 minutes until the top is golden brown. Serve the pie immediately.



### **Savoury Dumplings**

Ingredients:

6 oz of flour  
2 oz of breadcrumbs  
3 oz of chopped parsley  
A pinch of chopped thyme  
Salt and pepper

Method:

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly and add just enough cold water to make a stiff paste. Divide into 8 pieces and roll into balls. Cook for half an hour on the broth, keeping the pan covered.





### **Toad in The Hole**

#### Ingredients:

½ pint of milk or half milk/half water  
1 egg  
4 oz of plain flour  
Salt  
½ oz of lard or equivalent

1lb chipolata sausages

#### Method:

Place the milk and egg into a blender and blend until smooth. Gradually add the flour and a pinch of salt and continue blending until smooth. Leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven for 10 minutes. Place the lard in a shallow dish approximately 25 cm x 30 cm (10" x 12") and heat in the oven for 10 minutes. Add the sausages, pour over the batter and cook until the batter is golden brown.



### **Old Fashioned Ginger Nut Biscuits**

#### Ingredients:

10 oz of plain flour  
7 oz of sugar (half caster sugar and half soft brown sugar)  
1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda  
2 teaspoons of ground ginger  
1 1/2 teaspoons of baking powder

6 oz of margarine  
1 tablespoon of golden syrup or clear honey  
2 tablespoons of milk

#### Method:

Preheat the oven to 160 C. Place all the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl

Melt the margarine and syrup over a gentle heat, making sure it does not boil. Pour this mixture into the dry ingredients, add milk and mix thoroughly.

Shape into 35 small balls and place on a greased baking sheet, spread well apart and flatten slightly. The biscuits spread to about 2" across.

Bake for 16-18 minutes until browned. Leave to cool on the tray.

Have you seen our [BACK ISSUES](#) ?

## ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



### Questions:

- (1) How many centimetres make up 1 kilometre?
- (2) What is a pedometer?
- (3) What are the French words for a hairdresser?
- (4) Who played Alan Turner for 30 years in the soap Emmerdale?
- (5) Which two male actors starred in the film 'Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid'?
- (6) What is the capital of Missouri?
- (7) Where is a man's Adam's Apple?
- (8) Where is Guinea Conakry situated?
- (9) What is the currency of Mozambique?
- (10) What was the nationality of actor and dancer Patrick Swayze?
- (11) Which Argentinian club plays its football at El Estadio Antonio Liberti?
- (12) Give a rough definition of diabetes?
- (13) Boston Red Sox play what sport?
- (14) What is the Spanish word for marriage?
- (15) Who plays Roy Cropper in Coronation Street?
- (16) What is Boris Johnson's full name?
- (17) What is a gavel?
- (18) Where is most of the world's cocaine produced?
- (19) What is 12 minutes past five on the 24-hour clock?
- (20) How many times did the actor Rock Hudson marry?

### Answers:

(1) 100000 (2) A device that counts each step a person takes by detecting the motion of the person's hands or hips (3) Coiffeuse/Coiffeur (4) Richard Thorp (5) Robert Redford and Paul Newman (6) Jefferson City (7) At the front of the throat (8) West Africa (9) Mozambican Metical (10) American (11) River Plate (12) A chronic health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy – food is mostly turned into sugar and when your blood sugar goes up, it signals your pancreas to release insulin (13) Baseball (14) Matrimonio (15) David Nielson (16) Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson (17) A small hammer used by an auctioneer, judge or chair of a meeting to call order (18) Colombia (19) 17:12 (20) Once to Phyllis Gates from 1955 to- 1958

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**Editor's Final Word:** Thank you for taking the time and trouble to read this online magazine which is evolving all the time. If you would like to get involved, donate, advertise, or suggest how we can improve our work, then please contact us at: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk) Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert and Graham.

