

## **FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – August 2021. Edition No 80.**



Hello. I hope you are okay and enjoying your life. This is the eightieth edition of the magazine and I would like to dedicate it to my great friend Brenda Condoll who has helped me in so many ways - and continues to do so every day. I first met Brenda over 25 years ago when I moved into a group home where she was living, in Leeds. We have been close friends ever since and I think she is as nice as anyone you could meet anywhere.

If you want to get involved in any way with the magazine (in a non-sexist, non-racist and non-homophobic way) you can do so 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**

Someone who was an ugly duckling at school will swim back into your life and astound you with their attractiveness – what will you do? You may have been through a very tough time recently, but you will have learnt that sometimes it is better to tread water and go nowhere, than dive somewhere where there is no way back. It's now time

to shave your hairy legs.

### **Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec**

An extremely handsome man will try and charm his way into your affections, but be careful, as he has ulterior motives that will cost you dearly in the future. The planets all indicate that many good things will be coming your way if you stay true to yourself and follow the path you are on. A good time to plan a holiday, but be realistic about where you can afford to go.

### **Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan**

You consumed far too much alcohol during the lockdown so now maybe do a detox and weed out the many other bad habits that you also have at the same time. Your children may be difficult at the moment, but cut them some slack and remember what you were like yourself at their age! Some good financial news will come your way this month, so spread a bit of sunshine.

### **Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb**

It is time to stop concentrating on the past and seize the day – before the reaper seizes you! A man with missing teeth may come into your life and show you a new way to live, so lend him your ear. Maybe now is a good time to do something about the hair on your back as you look like some alien creature. A lady with a poorly cat may need your help in the near future.

### **Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar**

You have spent far too much time chasing after the object of your desire in vain, so now maybe you should cast your net elsewhere as so many combinations of people can work together. Now that you have plenty of disposable income, why not use a bit of it to make someone else's life a little better? A good time to add to your family. Make soya milkshakes.

### **Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr**

You might see a ghost in your kitchen this week, but it will do you no harm, and maybe even reveal the next winning Lotto numbers. Someone whom you consider to be a bit daft will

reveal some great truth to you and make you realise it is foolish to prejudge people. You will hear that someone has been slagging you off so why not get the truth from the horse's mouth?

### **Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May**

A proud mother will show you her new-born baby, but don't tell her that it is the ugliest baby you've ever seen as she may not appreciate your candour. You may receive a big utility bill as a result of lockdown, but don't worry as it will not break you. Count your blessings. Recently, you may have been short of confidence but remember you are a special person.

### **Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun**

If you are single, now is the time to look for someone with whom you can share your life as it's a drag cooking for one and we all have other appetites to satisfy. However, proceed with caution as some people will use you if they perceive you to be vulnerable. You are a lovely person and things will happen for you if only you stay careful and remain positive.

### **Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul**

You may experience some emotional pain at the end of this month, but this will only serve to make you appreciate the good times more. It is a great time to invest some energy and money into a new project that may not make you rich but will stimulate your mind and give you a sense of satisfaction. A beautiful black woman will teach you about more than her cuisine.

### **Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug**

The sun may be shining on you at the moment, but spare a thought for a friend who's lost in a cloud of doubt and confusion and try to talk to them. A little man in an expensive suit will try and impress you with his personal wealth, but is this what you're really looking for deep down? A good time to start experimenting in the kitchen. Buy some false eyelashes.

### **Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep**

A former friend will try and worm her way back into your good books, but be careful as the story she writes always ends the same. It is a good time to consider being a veggie but only convert for yourself and not just to please someone else. This week you will experience a piece of good fortune that will enable you to have your cake and eat it. Cream your bottom.

### **Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct**

You may not be as rich as you'd like at the moment but something will happen to an acquaintance that will make you realise how wealthy you really are health-wise. Do not venture on the weighing scales now as you may find you weigh as much as a blue whale and feel down. A letter may arrive in the mail that makes you feel appreciated though.

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## DO YOU THINK THERE IS LIFE BEFORE AND/OR AFTER DEATH?



### Chris Scheller

This is obviously a great question and is, I suppose, fundamental to how millions of people across the world interpret their lives.

The honest answer is, I don't know. On balance I would say I probably don't but not with the conviction of a 'devout atheist'!

The starting point must be are we more than our physical bodies? Do we have some sort of soul or spirit that can live separate to our bodies? Probably not but I can't say this with certainty. It would seem unlikely that any one religious belief about life after (or before) death could be right but I suppose that doesn't rule out there being 'something'. I was brought up to believe in heaven and hell and to be honest as a child that's terrifying!

I'm not sure that people should be taught to seek their reward in the afterlife. Firstly, shouldn't people have access to a good life here on earth? And, secondly, shouldn't we try and lead our lives ethically or morally because this is the right thing to do, not because it gains us entry to 'heaven' or a higher reincarnation!

It is interesting reading about near death experiences though, and how similar these appear to be. Are these just caused by chemicals in the brain playing tricks on us or are they something more real?

Personally, I'd like to believe that my whole essence just disintegrates to become part of the wider universe when I die, which probably sounds a bit 'hippyish' but seems much more comforting than anything I was brought up to believe.

### Graham Townsend

I am very much on the fence when it comes to this subject. It is a very interesting topic and one over which my opinion has changed somewhat as I have become older.

When I was a child, I was convinced there was some kind of life, other than the one I am currently living. I think this may have been influenced by a friend of my mother, who was very interested in reincarnation and was very spiritual. I have a very vivid memory of this lady and she told my mother I had shared some information with her, at a young age, I must have been around three years old, saying I had lived a previous life and had been killed by a dinosaur. Looking back now, this could have been a dream related to something I had seen on television.

It didn't end there, when I was a little older, I remember telling my mother that I had seen the face of my sister-in-law's grandmother, who had recently passed away, in the design of the carpet fabric on the staircase that looked in to my bedroom.

There wasn't really anything that changed my mind that reincarnation didn't exist, until I reached adulthood. I think having been brought up as a Christian, and having attended church

backed schools until the age of eleven, you hear regularly the story of Jesus Christ and the resurrection. This must have had some influence over my feelings on the subject.

I have to admit it is something I have not really thought about much in my adult life. Perhaps because I have not been surrounded by many people who are interested in the subject. Also, as you grow older, and depending again on the people around you, I think you become more cynical, when it comes to topics where there is no tangible proof that something actually exists or is real.

I hope this helps you to understand why I remain unsure as to whether there is another life.

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## GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ



### Questions:

- (1) Which Brazilian novelist is best known for his book “The Alchemist”?
- (2) Cherilyn Sarkisian is the birth name of which American singer?
- (3) Which English naturalist featured on television shows such as “The Really Wild Show” and “Springwatch”?
- (4) In cricket’s Indian Premier League, which state is represented by a team called the “Royals”?
- (5) Which element, and noble gas, is represented by the chemical symbol Kr in the Periodic Table?
- (6) Which UK organisation was awarded the George Cross by The Queen in July 2021?
- (7) Which product, commonly used in the supermarket, was invented in 1937 by Sylvan Goldman?
- (8) SZG is the code used for the airport serving which Austrian city?
- (9) Where in the human body would you find the stapes, the smallest bone in the body?
- (10) The word Suomi appears on postage stamps from which country?
- (11) The young of which animal is called a shoat?
- (12) In internet/text speak for what does the “T” in TMI stand?
- (13) What is the surname of the Dutch artist Rembrandt?
- (14) What name do the Hindus give to their ‘Festival of Light’ in October or November?
- (15) Who is the current vice president of the United States of America (as at 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021)?
- (16) What name is given to the emergency lane on a motorway?
- (17) Which well-known Italian fashion designer died of gunshot wounds in July 1997?
- (18) Which Canadian rapper released his first full studio album, “Thank Me Later”, in 2010?
- (19) Which English Tennis player reached the 4<sup>th</sup> round of Wimbledon 2021 in her first Grand Slam tournament?
- (20) Which Indian city is known as the “Pink City”?

## Answers

(1) Paulo Coelho (2) Cher (3) Chris Packham (4) Rajasthan (5) Krypton (6) The National Health Service (7) Shopping Trolley (8) Salzburg (9) Ear (10) Finland (11) Pig (12) Too (13) Van Rijn (14) Diwali (15) Kamala Harris (16) Shoulder/Hard Shoulder (17) Gianni Versace (18) Drake (19) Emma Raducanu (20) Jaipur

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## BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



### Armadillo

The armadillo, which is known as “little armoured one” in Spanish, is a New-World placental mammal in the order Cingulata. Chlamyphoridae and Dasypodidae are the only surviving family in the order, that includes anteaters and sloths. Nine extinct types and 21

extant kinds of armadillo exist, some of which are distinguished by the number of bands on their armour. All kinds of armadillo are known to the Americas, where they live in various environments.

Armadillos have a leathery armour shell and long, sharp claws for digging dens and for foraging for food and it is true to say that most armadillos eat insects, grubs and other invertebrates. Their legs are also short but they can move quite quickly. The average size of an armadillo is about 75cm (30 in) which includes its tail. However, the giant armadillo can grow up to 150 cm (59 in) and weigh up to 54kg (119 lb) while the pink fairy armadillo has a length of only about 13-15 cm (5-6 in). If threatened by a predator, Tolypeutes species can roll up into a ball – the only species of armadillo capable of doing this. Interestingly, the nine-banded armadillo prefers to build its burrows in moist soil near creeks, streams and arroyos where it lives and feeds.

Like all the Xenarthra lineages, armadillos originated in South America and due to the continent's former isolation, were confined there for a long time. Today, 11 species exist in Paraguay but many of them are threatened with extinction.

\* Ref Wikipedia

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## JUNE'S WORLD



Hello again. I hope everyone is well, happy and enjoying this lovely weather.

We went early this morning (Saturday) to St Aidans which we visit quite often; it was lovely and peaceful and there were not a lot of people around. There were

only three people swimming in the lake and a few people walking.

We keep saying that we are going to buy electric bikes to ride around the water on – the good thing about them is you can cycle a few miles and then press a switch to ascend inclines more easily.

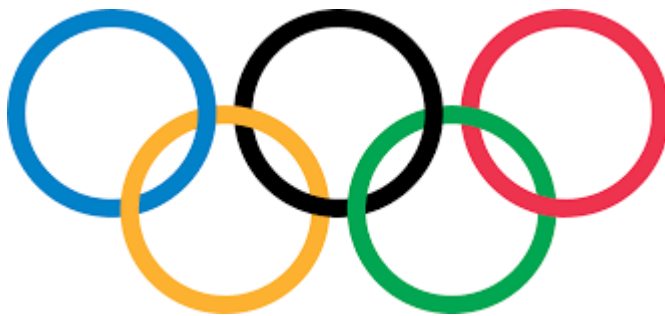
We have booked another holiday to Bridlington as we just came back from Scarborough where we had a good time. So, we thought with the weather being fine, we ought to take advantage while we are in good health. Since we retired, we've been to a lot of places and seen some incredible views of the countryside and we've also visited places like the city of York, which has some very interesting buildings like York Minster. The minster attracts lots of visitors as it's a fascinating building and helps generate money for the city. In addition, York has some nice museums worth visiting and if you go down to the river, you can hire a boat or patronise a lovely pub where you can buy snacks and dinners. Lots of people like to sit at the riverside eating their sandwiches and taking in the excellent views.

The Coronavirus is still very much around and the number of infections and deaths has risen again which is very sad; it looks like it's going to stay around like flu has and I suppose we will just have to get used to it.

We are looking forward to watching the big match tonight and hope that good footballers like Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane will do us proud but it is important to realise that they are under a lot of pressure to perform. Good luck England!

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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 move away from the regular format somewhat, by looking at a global sporting extravaganza, as opposed to an individual sport, I am of course talking about the Olympic Games, the current edition of which will be well underway by the time this article is published.

The first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens, Greece in 1896, after the founding of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Their creation was inspired by the ancient Olympic Games held in Olympia, Greece from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD.

The games traditionally take place every four years although, due to the current pandemic, this year's event was rescheduled from 2020. There are Summer Olympic Games and Winter Olympic Games. The first winter event took place in 1924, in Chamonix, France. Both sets of games took place in the same year until 1992 however, the IOC took the decision in 1986 to

place the events on separate four-year cycles, in even numbered years, commencing with the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

The Summer Olympic Games have increased in scope from a 42-competition event programme with fewer than 250 male competitors from 14 nations in 1896 to 306 events with 11,238 competitors (6,179 men, 5,059 women) from 206 nations in 2016. The Summer Olympics have been hosted on five continents by a total of nineteen countries. Following the conclusion of the current games in Tokyo, Japan, the 2024 event will be held in Paris, France, the 2028 event will be held in Los Angeles, USA and the 2032 event will be held in Brisbane, Australia.

Only five countries have participated in every Summer Olympic Games: Australia, France, Great Britain, Greece, and Switzerland. The United States leads the all-time medal table for the Summer Olympics. The scheduled 1916 Summer Olympics were cancelled following the onset of World War I. Likewise, due to World War II, the Games of 1940 (due to be held in Tokyo and temporarily relocated to Helsinki upon the outbreak of war) were cancelled. The Games of 1944 were due to be held in London but were also cancelled; instead, London hosted the first games after the end of the war, in 1948.

There has been a total of 42 sports, spanning 55 disciplines, included in the Olympic programme at one point or another in the history of the Games. The schedule has comprised 28 sports for three of the most recent Summer Olympics (2004, 2008, and 2016); the 2012 Games featured 26 sports because of the removal of baseball and softball. The current Games in Tokyo include karate, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing for the first time and baseball and softball are both now back in the fold.

The Winter Olympic Games originally comprised of five sports, broken into nine disciplines. These sports were bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, Nordic skiing (military patrol, cross-country skiing, Nordic combined, and ski jumping), and skating (figure skating and speed skating).

Like the Summer Olympic Games, there were no Games in 1940 or 1944 due to World War II. The Winter Olympic Games have been hosted on three continents by twelve countries. To date, twelve countries have participated in every Winter Olympic Games – Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. Six of these countries have won medals at every Winter Olympic Games – Austria, Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. The only country to have won a gold medal at every Winter Olympic Games is the United States. Norway leads the all-time Olympic Games medal table for Winter Olympic Games. When including defunct states, Germany (including the former countries of West Germany and East Germany) leads, followed by Norway, Russia (including the former Soviet Union), and the United States.

Since 1992 a number of new sports have been added to the Winter Olympic programme; which include short track speed skating, snowboarding, freestyle and moguls skiing. The next Winter Olympic Games are due to take place in Beijing, China in 2022. They will be followed by Milan & Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy in 2026.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Paralympic Games, a periodic series of international multi-sport events involving athletes with a range of disabilities. The Paralympic Games are organized in parallel with the Olympic Games. The first official



Paralympic Games was held in Rome in 1960. The first Winter Paralympic Games were held in 1976 in Örnköldsvik, Sweden.

I hope you have enjoyed this look at the Olympic Games.

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

\* Written with quite a bit of 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)

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## SWANSEA



Swansea is a coastal city and county in Wales and in 2014 had a population of 241,300 which was mainly composed of white, Asian, black, mixed race and other ethnic groups and which reflects a small population growth in the twenty-first century. The county of Swansea includes Swansea Bay and the Gower Peninsula.

The area around Swansea dates back to the Palaeolithic age and also many Bronze Age and Iron Age sites like the burial mound at Cillibion have been discovered. Also, the remains of a Roman villa were discovered in the Gower Peninsula. The modern name Swansea is actually derived from the Old Norse name of the original Viking trading post which was created by King Sweyn Forkbeard (960 -1014). As it was a key player in the copper-smelting industry, it also has had the nickname Copperopolis.

In medieval times, Swansea was well-known for its rich and valuable land which was highly contested by Welsh kingdoms. As mentioned, during Viking times, the River Tawe was a focal point for trade and a trading post was established between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. In 1106, after the Normans had taken control of the settlement, Swansea Castle was constructed and coins were minted bearing the name Swensi, Sweni and Svenshi in 1140.

Between 1158 and 1184, the first charter was granted by William de Newburgh, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Warwick which gave Sweynesse townspeople the right to develop the area. Then in 1215, King John introduced a second charter in which Swansea appears as Sweyse. Interestingly, Swansea was not granted city status until 1969.

Significantly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Swansea was a leading area for copper-smelting. This trade was truly international as numerous smelters along the River Tawe received copper and metal ores from not only Cornwall and Devon, but also from Africa, Australia, and North and South America. It was a fact that it was more economical to ship copper ore to Wales than to send it even to Cornwall as to smelt 1 ton of copper ore took about 3 tons of coal – so, as Swansea was close to the coalfields of South Wales, this made economic sense. However,

in the late 1800s, this industry declined drastically and so, the Port of Swansea started to focus on trading wool, wine, coal, cloth and hides.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the heavy industry declined resulting in much dereliction in the Lower Swansea Valley. Happily, the Lower Valley Scheme reclaimed much of the land and docks like the South Dock became the Marina. Like many industrial areas of Britain, Swansea was heavily bombed on the 19, 20, and 21 of February 1941 by the Germans, and much of the town was destroyed.

Today, the city has embraced the service sector economy and major employers are the DVLA, Admiral Group, Virgin Media, BT and Amazon.co.uk.

The modern visitor to Swansea is met by some interesting architecture as the city possesses 3 Grade I listed buildings (Swansea Castle ruins, the Tabernacle Chapel and the Swansea Guildhall) and it has various Grade II listed buildings including Swansea Museum, the Midland Bank building and the Ebenezer Baptist Chapel and Hall. It is well worth your while to visit the castle ruins, the Dylan Thomas Centre and the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery.

Normally, Swansea is a good place to be on Beaujolais Day when all the tables are booked up in bars and restaurants well in advance to taste the newly-released Beaujolais wine. This event brings a large amount of money into the city's economy.

If food is your thing, you could try some of the local cockles or locally sourced laverbread. Or, you might like to take advantage of being close to the sea and visit the lovely seaside village of Mumbles which contains a Victorian pier, boutiques, restaurants, cafes and many independent shops. There is also Swansea Bay which has 5 miles of beach, a promenade, museum and a leisure pool. Gower's Three Cliff Bay is also a great beach and offers sailing, water skiing, surfing, walking and cycling. It is worth noting that there are golf courses at Swansea Bay and Gower.

If you enjoy watching high quality sport, you could go and watch Swansea AFC at the Liberty Stadium or maybe, if you appreciate rugby union, you could invest some time in going to one of the Ospreys games.

Swansea is also a great place to live as well as visit. If you have a young family and fancy settling down in the Swansea area, you will find that it has a good education system with both good state and private schools as well as excellent opportunities of education at Swansea University or the University of Wales.

If you like a bit of culture, there is the Grand Theatre as well as the Dylan Thomas Theatre; you might appreciate the summer performances of Shakespeare at Oystermouth Castle or events at Singleton Park. In the Autumn, international orchestras and soloists also perform at Brangwyn Hall.

This is only a brief look at the city of Swansea, but I hope it is enough to whet your appetite and inspire you to visit it in the near future as it is well-served by road and rail – so, you have no excuse!

\* With a lot of help from Wikipedia

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## MORE FLASH FICTION FROM JASON WOOD



### MANOR HOUSE

It's the kind of garden you'd imagine a rainbow starting its journey in. Come early doors and you'll see the cobwebs draped like your grandma's tea cosies over the water can. In the nooks and crannies of the shed window, the old

bicycle cooped up in the corner – its treacherous fibres adorned with beads of dew and the hollowed-out wasps from last night's supper. Stay for long enough and you'll see the butterflies, cabbage whites and red admirals flitting from flower to flower, always out of reach. It's a garden where work will always be at a standstill. Jocelyn's wheelbarrow forever left to its own devices, to grow brambles and ragwort from its payload of muck. A garden within a garden.

The settee was ingrained with dirt, hardly standing at all. Half of it was decayed with rot and nearly as old as my grandmother. It was as if she'd peeled the walls to get to something underneath before she left us, like an orange she'd lost interest in. The fruit bowl had become the feeding ground for so many flies. I looked across the room and saw an antique lamp with a moth-eaten fringe. If it hadn't been for the possibility that she was still watching, I'd have thrown it in the bin. The fireplace overlooked the room. I imagined that if I knocked on the wood, squirrels would emerge. There was a coffee cup on the hearth, its surface had grown mould so thick a spider could walk across it if it dared to. The writing desk looked odd where it was, it was out of place. The deep scratches in the floorboards told the story of its travels back and forth.



### HOSPITAL FOOD

I could hear the unmistakable sound of the trolley with Georgina hanging onto it for grim death. I looked around expecting to see a mountain of untouched food, Georgina smiled and said: “how are you today?” It would have been better if Georgina was a long-legged blonde, but no she was the

complete opposite, sporting some tatty cardigan and flared trousers. “You must eat” she insisted. I felt like insisting she do one. But no wonder she liked me as I was a retired model. The matron arrived big and busty. She was a bully and would make you eat everything on your plate. I hated broccoli as it smelled like my son’s trainers - like rotting veg. “Eat your dinner” she would shout. “Think of all those unlucky people who don't have a bean”.

The bedpan was pretty embarrassing, I strained so hard I pissed the bloody catheter out and the nurse looked at me and shook her head and left me. She came back with a mountain of

bedding, looked at me curtly and said: "I'm sick of changing bloody sheets - men should learn to put a peg on it."



### TWO SCHIZOPHRENICS IN A LIFT

There were puddles of urine in the lift again. I must have complained a thousand times but the housing association never did anything about it - at this moment in time, they were probably sat with their feet up crunching on stale Hobnobs that had been in the cupboards for years. That's how pathetic the housing

association was.

My dog's kidneys were knackered so that's why I kept it away from the lift. I'm a very conscientious dog owner even if my dog Beth is severely incontinent. I put a sign up in the lift saying: PLEASE DO NOT LET YOUR DOG URINATE IN THE LIFT, THE CONSEQUENCES ARE THAT YOU'LL BE EVICTED. Ah, ah, what a joke. Your housing association won't lift a finger. Never mind at least I had tried.

There was a lad on the sixth floor who was severely schizophrenic who'd put his name down for bingo. I hated the game but he persuaded me to play; the only problem with Billy was he was slightly dyslexic which proved a problem as according to him he won fifty times that night! The bingo caller was a tosser, he was complaining he should never have left his bus driving job to come here. I whispered tosser under my breath again, an elderly woman sporting blonde curly hair and glasses looked at me and put her finger to her lips, I said: "we all swear, why don't you try it sometime? - It'll do you the world of good, words are like phlegm on your chest and need to come out". I've never seen anyone go so quick, she was obviously some kind of sociopath with no knowledge and extremely crap fashion sense. After what seemed like an eternity the bingo was finished and I hadn't won a bean. I could see the sociopath rooting about in her extremely tacky purse and felt like telling her to get one in a charity shop. Charities are good, they did a house clearance for us when our beloved aunt Rose kicked the bucket. The guy from the charity was gay but he didn't do anything for me so I just said "sorry I'm straight - I have been since I was a little boy". But he didn't give up. The result was that I spent a lovely night playing scrabble and discovered he wasn't gay, just lonely.

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## Album Review of: ALL THE COLOURS OF YOU



**By James**

**Review by Graham Townsend**

I am a long-term fan of James. I have seen them live twice, firstly on what was supposed to be their farewell tour in 2001, in their home city of Manchester, and then again, after they reformed, in my home town of Halifax on my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018.

Some people may not be familiar with their material but most people, who have any kind of interest in music, will probably be aware of their most well-known song called “Sit Down”, it reached number 2 in the UK Singles Chart in 1991.

This is their 16<sup>th</sup> studio album. It has a running time of just short of 50 minutes and contains 11 tracks. To date, the album has peaked at number 3 in the UK Albums Chart. Curiously, the track listing on the back cover shows the incorrect running order. The lyrics for each track appear in the liner notes/booklet and those listings are consistent with the actual running order. Whether this is a common error, or it is just my copy, I would be interested to find out!

The opening track “Zero” starts with the cheerful line “we’re all going to die, that’s the truth”. The track takes some time to get going however, it is not as dark as the opening line might suggest and actually builds to somewhat of a crescendo. This is followed by the title track. It was upon hearing this track that I decided to purchase this album. If you like the indie pop incarnation of James then, I think you will enjoy this one. I would say this is probably my favourite track. It was the first track from the album to be released as a single. It references President Trump and the KKK, as you can probably figure out from the title, it is an anti-racism song. As you listen to the album, you will realise there is a strong American undercurrent here. The most obvious reason, for those of you not aware of the fact, is that singer Tim Booth has been living in the USA for several years now.

As with many albums, the lyrics and titles often relate to issues that have personally impacted the artist or band members. “Recover” refers to the loss of Booth’s father-in-law to Covid during the earlier part of the pandemic in April 2020. “Beautiful Beaches” refers to the forest fires in California, from which Booth and his family fled later in the same year. This is also one of my favourite tracks on the album.

“Miss America” is a further cynical look at the Trump administration, it looks at the country from the viewpoint of it being a beauty pageant or the like. “Getting Myself Into” contains observations on life and relationships, this reminds me very much of James at their indie best from the 1990s. I love the line, “She’s there and she’s gone, I’m already half-past wrecked”.

“Magic Bus” is more of a dance track than anything else on here and is quite enjoyable.

“XYST”, the album’s closing track contains hints of both REM and Coldplay, probably as a result of producer “Jackknife” Lee’s previous work with those bands.

To summarise, there is a bit of everything in here but ultimately, you can definitely tell that it is a James album, and I consider it to be a good album.

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

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## MORE SUMPTIOUS RECIPES FROM JUNE CHARLTON



### Bread Rice and Apricot Pudding

Ingredients:

- 3 oz of pudding rice
- 2 oz of caster sugar
- 1 ½ pints of milk
- Grated nutmeg
- 1 ½ oz of butter or margarine
- 2oz of chopped, dried and ready to eat apricots

Method:

Rinse the pudding rice in cold water, drain well then place in a 2-pint buttered dish. Add the sugar and milk. Stir in the apricots and sprinkle the top with the nutmeg and dot with butter. Bake at 150 C for 1 ½ hours – 2 hours until the rice is soft and creamy.



### Chocolate Cherry Slices

Ingredients:

- 4 oz of chocolate
- 4 oz of desiccated coconut
- 4 oz of caster sugar
- 2 oz of glaze cherries, quartered
- 2 oz of soft margarine or butter
- 1 beaten egg

Method:

Preheat the oven to 160 C. Line a 30 x 20 cm tin with greaseproof paper or a non-stick baking liner. Melt the chocolate and line the base of the tin with the melted chocolate.

Mix together the other ingredients and spoon onto the chocolate. Bake for 20 – 30 minutes until pale golden brown. Cool in the refrigerator for 2 hours before cutting into squares.



## **Brioche**

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb of white bread dough
- 1 oz of melted butter
- 1 oz parmesan grated cheese
- 2 oz of Parma ham or cooked smoked ham
- Pinch of herbs
- 2 small beaten eggs

### Method:

Sprinkle the yeast over the flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the beaten eggs and 4 tablespoons of hand-hot water. Mix to a sticky dough and knead for 10 minutes flouring hands frequently. Spread out the dough onto a floured board and dot with butter. Knead until the butter is absorbed. Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover with greased cling film and leave to double in size (this will take approximately 1 hour). Punch down  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the dough and shape into a brioche tin and shape the remainder into a ball and push down onto the larger ball of dough forming the traditional shape of the bread. Cover loosely with greased cling film and leave for a further hour.



## **Egg and Potato Hotchpot**

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb of potatoes, peeled and boiled
- 8 oz of tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4 oz of mushrooms, washed and sliced
- 4 oz of courgettes, washed and sliced
- 4 eggs
- 2 oz of butter

4 oz of cheddar cheese, grated  
Salt and pepper  
A few onion-rings

### Method:

Fry the courgettes lightly in the butter. Add the potatoes, tomatoes and mushrooms and cook for a further 5 minutes. Season. Whisk up the eggs, add half the cheese and blend in the vegetables.

Pour into a greased ovenproof dish, cover with the remaining grated cheese and bake at 350 F (180 C) or gas mark 4 for 20 – 30 minutes.

Serve garnished with raw onion rings.

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## ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



### Questions:

- (1) What is the chemical symbol of sodium nitrate?
- (2) What nationality is the opera singer Katherine Jenkins?
- (3) How many molars does an adult person have?
- (4) What is the capital of Mozambique?
- (5) Where was President Joe Biden born?
- (6) What is the currency of Syria?
- (7) What do you call a female duck?
- (8) How is soya milk made?
- (9) What is the French word for 'Goodbye'?
- (10) Who is currently the President of the European Commission?
- (11) Who designed the first skyscraper?
- (12) What nationality is ex-footballer Dimitar Berbatov?
- (13) Who is the current captain of the Wales men's football team?
- (14) Who invented the electric toothbrush?
- (15) What kind of domestic animal is a Papillon?
- (16) What is a duodenal ulcer?
- (17) Who was the first actor to play James Bond?
- (18) What does GBH mean in British law?
- (19) Where was the first Pride march held?
- (20) What is the biggest desert in the world?

### Answers:

(1) NaNO<sub>3</sub> (2) Welsh (3) 12 (including 4 wisdom teeth) (4) Maputo (5) Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA (6) Syrian Pound (7) A hen or a duck (8) By soaking and grinding soy beans (9) Au revoir (10) Ursula von der Leyen (11) Major William Le Baron Jenny (12) Bulgarian (13) Gareth Bale (14) Philippe Guy Woog (15) A dog (16) A peptic ulcer that develops in the first part of the small intestine (duodenum) (17) Sean Connery (18) Grievous Bodily Harm – when a person unlawfully and maliciously, either wounds another person; or inflicts grievous bodily harm upon another person (19) New York City (20) Antarctic Desert

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**Editor's Final Word:** Thank you once again for taking the time and the trouble to read this publication – I hope you enjoyed it and would welcome any new input. Please contact us if you have time at: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk) Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert and Graham.