

## FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – February 2022. Edition No 86



Hello. I hope you are okay when you read this. This month (on the 17<sup>th</sup>) I am celebrating 24 years not drinking alcohol which I am pleased about although I know I must not take my eye off of the ball – I didn't drink every day but when I did drink, I wasn't able to drink in moderation and this caused me lots of serious problems. I now think alcohol is a serious problem in society and I am pleased to no longer have a relationship with it.

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[MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS](#)

[GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ](#)

[BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER](#)

[LETTERS PAGE](#)

[GRAHAM'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORT](#)

[SOME OF MY OPINIONS](#)

[BIBLE TALK](#)

[MORE OF JUNE'S WONDERFUL RECIPES](#)

[JUNE'S WORLD](#)

[ALBUM REVIEW – MUSIC OF THE SPHERES – BY COLDPLAY](#)

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

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## MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



### **Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov**

This month you may experience a crisis of faith but don't worry as this is quite a healthy thing to happen – and anyway, you will still believe you are superior to anyone else. Now is the time to be extra nice to an old person as it will soon be your turn to be like them and then you may find yourself needing

help too. Buy yourself some new slippers and smoke a pipe.

### **Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec**

A good time to travel to somewhere you've not been for a while where you can rekindle friendships and meet new people. Inclement weather may scupper your plans for an outside event so maybe think of alternative, pleasurable indoor activities. You may now start to realise that you are stuck on a financial treadmill and need to live in a different way.

### **Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan**

You are possibly feeling uncreative at the moment so concentrate on being practical until your creative juices start flowing again at the end of the month. A deaf lady may help you out and confirm to you that we all have a role to play in society. Last year was a very difficult one for you but you are still here and good times are not too far away for you.

### **Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb**

Someone who loves darts will aim their amorous arrows at you this week and show you how much they care by checking you both into a luxury hotel and making a massive fuss of you. However, you should seriously consider omitting garlic from your diet unless you are using it as a form of contraception. Apply to be on a T.V. gameshow as your luck is definitely in.

### **Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar**

Though Christmas may be a distant memory, why not treat yourself to something you've wanted for ages as you are basically a good person - even if you smell bad. Your celibacy may worry you and you will be tempted to break it this month, but surely, it's better to be alone than with the wrong person? Try and lose some of your extreme fat before it's too late.

### **Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr**

Your personal fragility will be obvious this month so do look after yourself and be kind to yourself as this is a crucial time in your life - and a stepping stone to bigger things. Why not

treat your partner to a lovely meal out this week as they have clearly been down in the dumps? It's time to cut salt from your diet and start swimming naked in the North Sea.

### **Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May**

An email from out of the blue will knock you for six and leave you feeling that all your efforts have just burnt down to a pile of useless ashes – but don't worry as like a phoenix you will rise up again and taste success. The long trudge through winter continues but there is light at the end of the tunnel and sunny times ahead. Stop eating like a demented pig.

### **Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun**

You may feel disappointed with what you have achieved in life, but this month you will realise that you've confronted all your icebergs and it's now plain sailing ahead! Romance may not have been in your life for years but that's all to change as long as you dismantle the walls you have built around you and start to look through more realistic eyes. Fart less.

### **Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul**

This week a woman with bright red fingernails will appear very unattractive to you, but it's okay as she doesn't see you as any great oil painting. Someone irritates you with their constant preaching, but just step back and realise they don't have any more answers for the big questions than you do. Start having the odd shower or two if you want to impress others.

### **Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug**

You may still have a bee in your bonnet about someone who wronged you in the past, but now is the time to move on and be positive as this life is so short. Also, you will soon find yourself in a difficult situation when you will have to choose between taking a chance with huge potential rewards – or being your usual boring and safe self. Take your coffee black.

### **Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep**

Some people think you talk too much (and must have had numerous mouth transplants) but this month you will be lost for words when someone declares their love for you. Money is very tight at the moment so you will have to tighten your belt and live off the memory of your wild Christmas exploits. A good time to try once again to kick the dreaded tobacco.

### **Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct**

Maybe it's a good time to start to eat lots of bananas to compensate for not being able to afford a much-longed for holiday in the Caribbean. You are usually a political animal but you will have to change if you are to attract a love prospect who finds it all a great yawn. Now is a good time to watch less soaps on TV and live your own life. Your beard looks ridiculous.

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## GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ



### Questions:

- (1) Which notable former NFL commentator, and coach with Oakland Raiders, died aged 85 in December 2021?
- (2) Who is popularly credited with being the father of economics?
- (3) Who is the current manager of Premier League team Crystal Palace?
- (4) Which fruit has the scientific name “citrus aurantium”?
- (5) Which UK prime minister was assassinated on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1812?
- (6) What is the collective name for a group of apes?
- (7) Spencer Matthews from the reality series “Made in Chelsea” is married to which Irish model and media personality?
- (8) Which planet is the hottest in the Solar System?
- (9) Which country was the Caesar Salad invented in?
- (10) What is the German word for song?
- (11) What does the acronym SCUBA stand for?
- (12) Which Shakespearean play features Portia, Shylock, and Antonio?
- (13) Who is the Greek goddess of wisdom?
- (14) What is the most common letter in the English alphabet?
- (15) Who was King of England from 1135 to 1154?
- (16) Monks Cross Shopping Centre is in which English city?
- (17) Tl is the chemical symbol for which element of the Periodic Table?
- (18) County Armagh is in which country of the UK?
- (19) The poem “The Raven” was written by which American?
- (20) Which actress and former “Golden Girl” died in December 2021 aged 99?

### Answers

(1) John Madden (2) Adam Smith (3) Patrick Vieira (4) Orange (5) Spencer Perceval (6) Shrewdness (7) Vogue Williams (8) Venus (9) Mexico (10) Lied (11) Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (12) The Merchant Of Venice (13) Athena (14) E (15) Stephen (16) York (17) Thallium (18) Northern Ireland (19) Edgar Allan Poe (20) Betty White

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## BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



### Golden Eagle

The majestic Golden Eagle is a huge bird of prey that originates in the Northern Hemisphere. It is one of the better-known birds of prey with a huge wingspan and can be found in stretches of Eurasia, North America and North Africa. The Golden Eagle is known to be one of the best flyers amongst eagles. It is 66 to 102 centimetres in length although the females are larger than the

males. Interestingly, American Golden Eagles are smaller than the large Eurasian species.

Golden Eagles are dark brown though immature ones have white on their tail but the young tend to be black on their back especially in East Asia. They fly at high speeds and have powerful feet that enable them to prey on hares and ground squirrels though also on other smaller mammals. It goes without saying that they have excellent vision and can see their prey from large distances. Due to its hunting prowess, the bird was revered in many ancient and tribal cultures and has also been used in falconry.

The Golden Eagle builds its large nest in cliffs and they return to them in the spring for a number of years. Normally the female of the species lays up to four eggs although only one or two young survive beyond three months.

Ref. Wikipedia

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## LETTERS PAGE



### **Dear Editor**

I was just walking along a pavement in East Leeds when a 'masked' cyclist charged towards me causing me to jump out of his way – otherwise he would have mowed me down.

When are the police going to start issuing fines to cyclists who shouldn't be on the pavement in the first place? Nothing ever seems to get done

about this problem.

**Colette Friedman, Leeds**

**Dear Editor**

I liked the letter in the last edition suggesting that we need to form a new political party in England. I would like to go one step further and propose that ex-public-school people are excluded from the party as they are usually guilty of wanting to preserve the status quo (which they do very well out of) and would make no meaningful contribution to positive social change.

**Terence Bucktrout, Norwich**

**Dear Editor**

Thank God for the NHS and everyone who works in it. It has performed miracles during this pandemic and saved as many lives as it could.

I do think it would be a crying shame if the right-wing of this country managed to privatise the NHS in the pursuit of profit, as many ordinary people would be unable to afford the quality care that they now enjoy. Long live the NHS!

**Jo Staunton, Grimsby**

**Dear Editor**

Whilst I think it is good to recognise people's good work, I'm not sure the present Honours System is the right way to do so and that it can be taken seriously by any intelligent person.

It seems ludicrous to me that someone can become a 'sir' or a 'dame' from riding fast around a cycling track whilst people who have dedicated their lives to serving others are given some inferior gong.

Maybe now is the time to scrap the whole Honours System which just divides people?

**Maisy Ruckledge, Newcastle**

**Dear Editor**

It has been terrible to witness people being very ill and sometimes dying from this virus. However, it has also been worrying to meet people who won't wear a mask at all, and who refuse to get vaccinated for political reasons.

I am of the opinion that this pandemic transcends politics and that conspiracy theorists are wide of the mark. We all need to pull together.

**Marcus Wright, Bolton**

## SALISBURY



Salisbury is a small cathedral city in Wiltshire, England, which was originally located at Old Sarum but later relocated to New Sarum – a City Charter was issued in 1227. Modern Salisbury (it became officially known as this in 2009 when Salisbury City Council was established) is located about 20 miles from Southampton, 30 miles from Bath and 78 miles from London. It lies in a valley on largely chalk and the nearby rivers are redirected to feed into the public gardens. Importantly, Stonehenge (a

UNESCO World Heritage Site) is 8 miles northwest of Salisbury. The name Salisbury is a partial translation of the Roman Celtic name Sorbiodunum.

The city has a fascinating history, and as mentioned, it was first located at Old Sarum where the hilltop shows signs of an early settlement as it was near a crossroads of several early trade routes. Interestingly, it lies near the Neolithic sites of Stonehenge and Avebury. A hillfort (between 600 and 300 BC), during the Iron Age, was constructed around the hilltop and it is thought that the Romans may have occupied the site. When the Saxons invaded, Old Sarum fell to king Cynric of Wessex in 552, but they didn't pay much attention to it until the Viking invasions when they restored its fortification. However, it was sacked and burned by the Dano-Norwegian king Sweyn Forkbeard in 1003. The Norman invasion of 1066 resulted in a motte-and-bailey castle being built on the site which was held directly by Norman kings. A cathedral was also built which was then storm-damaged, and consequently, rebuilt in the new town of New Sarum.

The second cathedral was built on wooden faggots, and later, a 440 ft tall spire was added – many of the stones used in this construction came from the original cathedral. Many people consider the building to be a masterpiece of early English architecture and the spire's large mechanical clock, installed in 1386, is one of the world's oldest surviving examples of this type. It is worth noting that the best-preserved copy of the Magna Carta is housed in the cathedral. Unfortunately, the old site of Old Sarum was allowed to fall into disuse.

But even though Salisbury was a relatively small city, it played a significant role in England's history with the Parliament of England meeting at New Sarum in 1324, 1328 and 1384. Riots occurred in the city in 1450 over the demise of Salisbury's cloth trade, and in 1488, the Duke of Buckingham was executed at Salisbury following him leading a large-scale rebellion against Richard III. Also, during the Great Plague of London, Salisbury was where Charles III held court in the cathedral close. Then, in 1688, James III arrived in the city to unsuccessfully lead about 19,000 men against the Glorious Revolution.

In more recent times, the Luftwaffe destroyed important factories building Supermarine Spitfires in 1940. These factories were mainly staffed by young women who were trained in the aircraft construction process. A memorial to these workers (and to others involved in the process) was unveiled in Castle Road, Salisbury in July 2021 at one of the sites of a factory.



Salisbury was also in the news in March 2018, when former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, were poisoned there.

The demographic makeup of the city is not unusual for England, for as the 2011 census shows, the majority of people were white and Christian although the following religions are also represented: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and some others.

Today, the major employer is Salisbury District Hospital, although in the recent past, major employers were Salisbury Gas, Light & Coke Company and Friends Life office which closed in 2015. In addition, Salisbury was famous for its cutlery industry until the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Early motor cars were also manufactured in the area by Dean and Burden Brothers.

If you are the type of person who enjoys a spot of retail therapy, then you will appreciate the following shopping centres: The Old George Mall, The Maltings, Winchester Street and the Cross Keys Shopping Centre. Markets have always played a large role in the city's life with them being held regularly since 1227. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Market Place had four crosses but today only the Poultry Cross remains. A fair has been held in the city since Henry III granted the Bishop of Salisbury a charter to do so in 1226 – now a funfair is held each year in October.

Music, has for a long time, played a major role in the cultural life of Salisbury, with the composer Handel being a visitor. The building of the Assembly Rooms, where many famous musicians and singers have performed, added much to city life. There is also the important Salisbury annual International Arts Festival that is worth patronising. This started in 1973 and offers a programme of live music, dance, public sculpture and street performance. If you appreciate a good play, you could also visit Salisbury Playhouse which produces 8-10 plays a year and welcomes touring productions.

When in the city, many people enjoy visiting the museum which is situated in the King's House which is a grade I listed building that dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The museum has a permanent exhibition called the Stonehenge Exhibition and also includes the skeleton of the Amesbury Archer and amongst other things, has a collection of costumes and textiles with some for children to try on.

Sport is important to many people including those in Salisbury, which has a lot to offer both player and spectator – there are numerous teams for football, rugby, cricket, hockey and bowls. Salisbury Racecourse offers a good standard of flat racing, while the snooker club, offers a gentler form of recreation. For those interested in aviation, there is the Old Sarum Airfield where aviation-businesses including flying schools are to be found.

The education system in Salisbury is very healthy and it possesses the only grammar schools in Wiltshire, along with faith schools, state schools and some independent ones. For sixth formers there is also Salisbury Sixth Form College as well as Wiltshire College which offers further education courses as well as courses in association with Bournemouth University.

So, if you think you would fancy visiting modern Salisbury, then maybe, you should make the effort to do so! Road is the best form of transport to use and there are some excellent park



and ride schemes. However, you could also use Salisbury railway station which has hourly trains from places like Cardiff Central and Bristol Temple Meads.

Salisbury may not be a place you have considered visiting before, but it has much to offer in both a modern and historic sense.

\* With a lot of help from Wikipedia

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## GRAHAM'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORT



So, we've reached February already, seems only a few days since Christmas was here!

I always thought of it as one of the quieter sporting months in the calendar, how wrong I was as I started compiling my notes for this article.

For starters we have the Winter Olympic Games. They commence on 4<sup>th</sup> February in Beijing, China and run through until 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022. I used to love watching the games when I was younger. I think the lack of medals from a Team GB perspective put me off a little as I got older however, there are some spectacular events that form the crux of the Olympiad and it will certainly appeal to those who love the combination of snow, the outdoors and excitement. My favourites were usually the Men's Downhill skiing competition, the bobsleigh and the ski jump.

Moving on, we have the start of the Six Nations rugby union tournament on 5<sup>th</sup> February. The competition runs through to the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Wales will be looking to defend the title they won in 2021. They just missed out on the Grand Slam in 2021, when they were beaten by 32-30 in their final match versus France. They will no doubt be out for revenge this time whilst England will be looking to improve on last season's fifth place finish, having won the title on points difference in 2020.

The final of the Africa Cup of Nations takes place in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 6<sup>th</sup> February. With pre-tournament favourites such as the defending champions Algeria and Nigeria already eliminated, will we see a victory for an outsider nation like Guinea or Burkina Faso? It should be a fascinating occasion whatever the outcome.

One of the biggest sporting events in the world takes place on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at the SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California. We are of course referring to Super Bowl 56. With defending champions Tampa Bay Buccaneers eliminated, perhaps the Kansas City Chiefs will go one better this time or could we see the LA Rams, San Francisco 49ers or Cincinnati Bengals get their hands on the Vince Lombardi Trophy? At the time of writing all four teams are still in the running.

This month also sees the return of the UEFA Champions League, Europa League and Europa Conference League. We have reached the knock out stages of all three competitions. In England, the fourth round of the FA Cup takes place between Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February. There will also be chance for either Chelsea or Liverpool to get their hands on the Carabao Cup when the final of that competition takes place at Wembley Stadium on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

That sounds like a veritable feast of entertainment for sports lovers all over the globe to enjoy!

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

\* With a little help from Wikipedia

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## SOME OF MY OPINIONS



**Written by Clare Walton**

Here are some of my opinions which you may or may not agree with – they are just opinions that I would like to express here...

**The British Royal Family:**

When I was a little girl, I used to dress up and pretend to be a princess, now that I am a woman, I find the whole concept of royalty disturbing and out-dated. It's not that I hate the human beings that

we call royals, but I think the system is unfair on them and unfair on us. Imagine being born into such a position of superiority but also one from which it is almost impossible to escape, and imagine not being able to enjoy the simple pleasures of life without being harassed by the media and by people in general. On the other hand, it is clearly wrong that someone can be born into a position like Head of State which an ordinary person cannot aspire to - whatever they achieve in life. How can a democracy have an unelected Head of State!? You, might have worked out that I am a Republican but wish no harm to anyone else.

**Professional Football:**

Like a lot of people, I follow my favourite football team without paying the exorbitant prices to enter a top-flight ground in England. I do enjoy watching a good game of football on TV but it is tainted for me by the ridiculous wages that top players receive. I understand that football is a short career, but what is wrong with ex-footballers working for a living – like the rest of us? I also agree with those who say that many footballers would just have been yobs on a street corner if they weren't blessed with the skills to be a footballer – and had the breaks. Whilst we are talking about yobs, I think the spitting that modern players do is horrible and sets a bad example for young spectators who think this is normal behaviour.

Rugby players must also almost wet themselves when they see footballers rolling around after an innocuous challenge.

### **Independent Schools:**

There is no argument that most independent schools in the UK attain higher grades for the students. However, I not only think that the system is completely unfair (where one – if one can afford it, can buy a superior education and life chances), but also that it produces some very odd and elitist people who often go on to influence the rest of the population in a negative way. What I am trying to say is that independent schools, in my opinion, produce mostly right-wing people who are not concerned about the well-being of society, but about themselves and their personal greed. I think it would be much fairer if there was a more level playing field in education, and in life in general, and people became successful because of their ability and not because of their family's money or connections. Having said this, there must also be a safety net for the vulnerable as society **does** exist!

### **Personal Wealth:**

Whilst I would like to see a fairer world, I recognise the fact that the world would be a very dour place if everyone was the same and had the same possessions. But I really can't get my head around someone holding on to millions and millions of pounds/dollars/euros whilst other people can hardly afford to eat and pay their rent. Surely, there should be a limit on personal wealth (who needs more than £10 million for example?) but I know that those at the top of society would never allow this to happen as this would diminish their personal wealth and absolute power. Like most people, I would welcome an increase in the level of my personal wealth but I am in no way interested in amassing a fortune, by any means, – life is too short to worry about money all the time!

### **Celebrities:**

I think most celebrities that I see in the media are a joke. They may have a modicum of talent but most of them come across as shallow and egotistical. They seem to succeed because they have confidence – often unfounded. Many also seem prepared to advertise anything on TV – whether or not they believe in it or use it themselves. Many people seem to crave fame but surely it is the work that you produce that is more important than the fame it brings you? I really think celebrities could do a lot more to bring about a more emotionally prosperous society instead of just getting off on themselves. As you may have guessed, I am not a fan of celebrity!

### **Equality of the sexes:**

When a man opens a door for me, I don't think he is being sexist or patronising towards me – I am pleased and appreciate his politeness and kindness. I think men and women have things in common, but that they are different in some ways. Both sexes are capable of doing things that the other can't, but we are of the same species and need to respect each other. I don't however agree with cultures that treat women as second-class citizens as without women the human race would obviously not survive! Women should have equal rights to men and an equal say in how life is led. They should also receive equal pay for doing the same work!

## **Religion:**

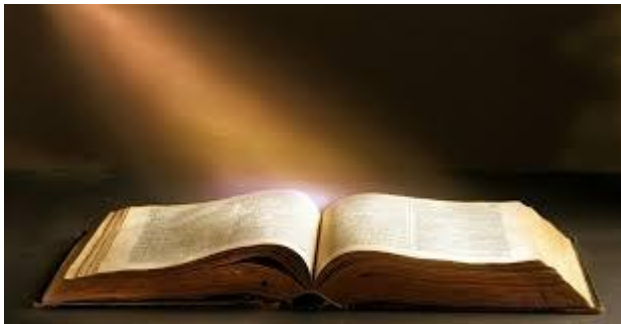
Religion is very important to some people and not to others. I find it difficult to believe that there is some supernatural being orchestrating everything behind the scenes but I know that religion can bring great comfort to a lot of people - especially in times of distress. I also think it is wrong that you have to be a certain religion to 'qualify' to go out with a member of the opposite sex, as I think anyone should be able to spend their life with anyone regardless of what they believe. I also think it is healthy for people of different cultures to get together and share their experiences – and their genes!

## **Homosexuality:**

I have no problem with who loves who and who wants to be with whom. I think it is great that gay people can now freely express themselves. However, I do wonder what is going on when I can see clearly in nature that a man and woman come together to reproduce? What I am trying to say is that I love gay people but that I can't quite understand it as I'm not gay.

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## **BIBLE TALK**



**Sent in by Peter Smith**

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."  
Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

Notice that Jesus did not say "shoot your enemies".

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you."  
John 15:15 (NKJV)

So, we do not need to talk to Jesus in a funny voice.

## MORE OF JUNE'S WONDERFUL RECIPES



### Paprika Crisps

#### Ingredients:

2 large potatoes  
3 tablespoons of olive oil  
½ teaspoon of paprika pepper

#### Method:

Using a sharp knife, slice the potatoes very thinly so that they are almost transparent. Drain the potato slices thoroughly and pat dry with paper towels. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and add the paprika stirring constantly to ensure that the paprika doesn't catch and burn.

Add the potato slices to the frying pan and cook them in a single layer for about 5 mins or until the potato slices just begin to curl slightly at the edges. Remove the potato slices from the pan using a perforated spoon and transfer them to paper towels to drain thoroughly.

Thread the potato slices onto several wooden kebab skewers. Sprinkle the potato slices with a little salt and cook over a medium hot barbecue (grill) or under a medium grill for 10 mins turning frequently, until the potato slices begin to crisp. Sprinkle with a little more salt, if preferred, and serve.



### Cheese Soufflé

#### Ingredients:

2 oz of butter or margarine  
2 oz of plain flour  
½ pint of milk  
½ teaspoon of mustard powder  
4 oz of cheddar cheese, grated  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

3 eggs, separated

#### Method:

Preheat the oven for 10 mins. Place the butter, flour and milk in a pan and whisk constantly over a gentle heat until smooth. Bring to the boil and cook for 2 mins until thick and smooth. Remove from the heat, then stir in the mustard and cheese and beat in the egg yolks.

Whisk the egg whites until stiff, then fold into the sauce with a metal spoon.

Pour into a buttered (2 pint) soufflé dish and cook for 35 – 40 mins or until cooked.





## **Farmhouse Cream Scones**

### Ingredients:

1lb of self-raising flour  
A teaspoon of baking powder  
¼ teaspoon of salt  
1 oz of sugar  
1 egg  
½ pint of milk  
1 tablespoon of cream  
4 oz of butter

### Method:

Sieve together the flour, baking powder and salt. Rub in the butter or margarine, stir in the beaten egg and mix with the milk to an elastic dough. Add cream. Knead lightly on floured board and roll out into a thickness of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. Cut into rounds with a small cutter and place on a greased, floured baking tray. Brush the tops with rest of the milk sweetened with sugar.

Bake immediately in hot oven for 12-15 mins at gas mark 8 or 450F.

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## **JUNE'S WORLD**



Hello everybody or is it hello everyone? I hope you all had a good Christmas and got together with your families or friends. The last year has been dreadful with the pandemic. Lots of people are still getting Covid and because the numbers are still high, it makes you wonder when it's all going to end. It will probably be like flu which is always around.

Well getting back to Christmas, we had a lovely Christmas Day as we went to our son and daughter-in-law for our Christmas dinner, it was a lovely meal with all the trimmings, we had a starter, then the main course, and were all so full that we had to have a break before our Christmas pudding.

Like I said, it was a lovely day, but unfortunately, on Boxing Day – out of nowhere, I started coughing up blood and I was very nervous. My husband said that he was taking me up to the doctors in Kippax which was open. They took one look at my hankie which was soaking with blood, and gave me a card for the hospital which said urgent. We then went straight to the A & E hospital where they performed lots of tests. They said it was not lung cancer, x-rayed me and said they were sending me for some more tests. In all, we were at the hospital for about 5 hours, and finally after putting needles in my left arm (which was quite an uncomfortable

experience) we were allowed to return home. As a result, I have got some whopping bruises but if everything is alright, it is a small price to pay. I've got to go to the hospital again on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, but I'm feeling optimistic that everything will be alright.

We've booked a 4-day holiday in Scarborough for later on in the month, which will be lovely even at this time of year; we've been quite a lot to the Norbreck hotel so we know that it will be a nice break after having my health scan.

Every Monday, I go with my husband to Selby which is a lovely way to spend a few hours. We look around the shops and we've come across a nice café called The Hub which is pleasant and comfortable. We don't have a big meal as they serve snacks like jacket potato and cheese and all-day breakfast – which we like. I thought there would be more sales on in the shops but most of them are closed after Christmas and the New Year. I like to buy Christmas and birthday presents for the coming year.

When we last went to Selby, we went in the magnificent abbey as normal but because they were stock taking, we had to do without our usual cup of tea.

We are going to Halifax on Wednesday to have a look round and to visit Marks & Spencer's in order to spend the vouchers we were given for Christmas – last month there, I bought a lovely sheepskin coat which is very warm and ideal for winter.

Anyway, I'll say Bye for now and look after yourselves. June.

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## ALBUM REVIEW – MUSIC OF THE SPHERES – BY COLDPLAY



### Review by Graham Townsend

This is the ninth studio album by Coldplay. It has the subtitle “Vol I. From Earth with Love”. It debuted at No.1 in the UK Album Chart, their ninth chart topper to date.

I have seen the album described as a space concept album, not dissimilar to their second album X&Y, which was released way back in 2005. I would say this is a pretty accurate reflection of the music you will find here. For me, this brought to mind “Venus and Mars” by

Wings and “War of the Worlds” by Jeff Wayne although, musically I would say there are few comparisons you can realistically make.

Apparently it is set in a fictional planetary system called The Spheres, which contains nine planets, three natural satellites, a star and a nebula. Each one of them corresponds to a song. Singer Chris Martin claims the inspiration came from the Star Wars film franchise.

Many people, especially in the UK, whilst not necessarily being familiar with the music of Coldplay, will probably recognise “Higher Power” from the 2021 BMW “Power of Action” television advertisement. The song is a full on commercial piece of pop music, something



Coldplay are very good at. At the other extreme you have very short pieces of experimental music in “Music of the Spheres”, “Alien Choir” and “Music of the Spheres II”. These pieces are all represented by symbols in the track listing as is “Human Heart”, which differs in that it lasts for nigh on four minutes, is an actual song and features We Are King, who share vocals with Chris. The aforementioned symbols represent some of the celestial bodies referred to earlier in this review. Whilst I was not overly excited when listening to these experimental pieces, I didn’t feel the urge to press the fast forward button.

The collaborations with both Selena Gomez (“Let Somebody Go”) and BTS (“My Universe”) work well in my opinion. The latter collaboration is one of my favourite songs on here. It is another top quality piece of pop music and bears all the hallmarks of being produced by Max Martin, which this album has been. My favourite track is the final track on the album “Coloratura”. It’s a little bit different to what I expected from them and also quite lengthy, coming in at over ten minutes long. This accounts for almost a quarter of the total running time for the album, at just short of forty-two minutes. My initial thought on hearing the song was “this is a bit weird” but as it went on I thought “ooh I actually really like this”

“Coloratura” is the track that possibly typifies why some people may feel this album is somewhat self-indulgent. The band may argue they are at the point where they can take, what some may see as, a bit of a liberty at this stage of their musical career. On that basis, it is difficult to disagree with the band’s decision to go down this route.

Although there have been generally mixed reviews in the press, overall I feel the quality is fairly good, even if there are some strange interludes in and amongst it all.

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

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## ADVENTURES OF A MAN SITTING DOWN - 10

**Written by Krishna Francis**

I begin to write this as the kettle boils to provide me with Lemsip to help ease my terrible case of ‘man’ flu. Actually, technically it’s not Lemsip but a generic version of the same. I raise this as my spell check told me Lemsip isn’t actually a word. However, I added a capital L and it’s still showing the dotted red line under the word. Who knows? That seems like a circular consideration to begin with but I guess during winter we all reduce our activity to a very simple wake up, do something for a bit, make sure we eat enough, then go to sleep. That’s it. In the middle of this we have sometimes to fight off the occasional infection as is the case for me, hence the lemon flavoured, paracetamol laced, hot drink.

Yet have I let this feeling that I must hunker down guide me? Nope. My friend Tracy has spent the last couple of months trying to get me to visit her guest house in Liverpool. Due to it being the off season she had a free room to put me in. Well, near Liverpool, closer to another place, which is in Crosby. Which sticks in the mind because we went for a wheel

along the sea front and I was shocked to see a wild swimmer apparently standing waist deep in water ready to take the dive in and swim. He was initially partially masked by the dunes that lie between the footpath and the sea. Eventually we paused to take a selfie and I realised there was no movement at all. Only then did I realise that these were the strange sentinels created by Anthony Gormley. There they stood in the middle of that rough sea, challenging the waves and making us think of the simultaneous strength and frailty of our bodies. In a way that was a similar position to the one Tracy was putting me in.

Staying with Tracy made me evaluate what it was that I am able to do. At home, when watching TV, I sit in my wheelchair. It's just easier that way. Tracy suggested I take a seat in an armchair. As I only have control over the top quarter of my body the thought of ending up on the floor is terrifying. I would struggle to pull myself back into my chair without the help of an able-bodied person. I took a leap, or rather bounce, of faith and got used to swinging myself into and out of the chair. It felt really marvellous to be able to do something so ordinary. Enjoying the consolations of it being winter we submitted to our baser instincts and sat there drinking wine, watching films, chatting and, occasionally, dozing, both of our wheelchairs lying challengingly vacant besides our comfy chairs.

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## ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



### Questions:

- (1) Who is the 2021 F1 World Champion?
- (2) Where does the food falafel originate from?
- (3) What is the French word for sword?
- (4) Who invented the cigarette lighter?
- (5) Which country produces the most flour?
- (6) What is the currency of Tunisia?
- (7) Who does the footballer Dominic Calvin-Lewin play for?
- (8) Who is the most capped male Great Britain rugby league player?
- (9) What are the new seven wonders of the world?
- (10) Where is the cheese Gorgonzola made?
- (11) What is a sporran?
- (12) Who was the first actor to play Frankenstein?
- (13) How old was the actor William Shatner when he went into space?
- (14) What is the average age expectancy for a US female?
- (15) What are the ingredients of the drink Pina Colada?
- (16) How much did a first-class stamp cost in the UK in 2021?
- (17) What is the biggest planet in our solar system?
- (18) Who is the world record holder for the Women's 200 metres?
- (19) What is 27 minutes past 11 pm on the 24-hour clock?
- (20) Where was actor William Shatner born

**Answers:** (1) M. Verstappen (2) Middle East (3) epee (4) Johann Wolfgang Dobereiner (5) China (6) Tunisian dinar (7) Everton F.C. (8) Gary Schofield and Mick Sullivan (9) Great Wall of China, Chichen Itza, Petra, Machu Picchu, Christ the Redeemer, Colosseum, Taj Mahal (10) Italy (11) A pouch that performs the same function as pockets on the pocketless kilt (12) Boris Karloff (13) 90 (14) 78.79 years (15) Pineapple juice, white rum, coconut cream and a wedge of pineapple to garnish (16) 85p (17) Jupiter (18) Florence Griffith-Joyner (19) 23:27 (20) Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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**Editor's Final Word:** Thank you for taking the time and trouble to read this publication and I hope you have enjoyed something in it. We are constantly looking to evolve the magazine and would always welcome new people getting involved with it. If you would like to do so, you can contact us at: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk) Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert and Graham.