

## FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – January 2025. Edition 121.



Hello. I hope you had a good, peaceful Christmas and that this year has started well for you and your family and friends.

Anyone can contribute to this e-magazine as long as it is in a non-racist,

non-sexist and non-homophobic way. You can contact us at: [dean@fthm.org.uk](mailto:dean@fthm.org.uk)

Please note that you can view our website at: [www.fromthehorsesmouth.org.uk](http://www.fromthehorsesmouth.org.uk)

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### MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



#### Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

2025 will be the best year you will ever experience as long as you address the many flaws in your character and conform more. A hairless man will astound you with his disloyalty and make you think twice about confiding in him in the future. Seeing a pregnant

woman may make you crave a child. Pity someone who is having a difficult time and show them compassion.

#### Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

You have really abused your body over Christmas, so now is the time to do something about it. Now that everything is over, don't be too deflated as exciting things await you this year. A mystery parcel may be left on your doorstep that will make you happy and glad to be alive. This month, you may frequently visit a cashpoint as money floods into your life. Give.

### **Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan**

A so-called “intellectual” will reveal their extreme stupidity and lack of common sense this week. This year will be a good one for you, but do remember the reaper could call at any time. A ringless woman will flirt with you today, but don’t get carried away as it is only a bit of fun to her. Tell someone you love them if you know it is true and watch their reaction. Masticate.

### **Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb**

You may be disappointed by your child’s academic performance, but you should have learnt by now that intelligence can take many forms. Someone will short-change you this week, just politely correct them and don’t trust them again. A lady who views the world different to you, will give you a gift that lifts your spirits and intoxicates your mood. Get some false teeth.

### **Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar**

You have been buying cheap clothes, but think more about where and how they’re sourced this year. The baby you have been trying for will come along, but do remember that a child is not just to be wheeled out at Christmas. At the moment, things are hard for you but it’s okay as you have all the tools to cope. Spend some dough on making some nice homemade bread.

### **Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr**

This month, you will meet a beautiful young woman early one morning who will blow your mind and make you question your sexuality. Your extreme fondness for junk food will start to ruin your lovely complexion, so think about this. It is a good time to distance yourself from your bookmaker and start to spend more on your loving family instead. Learn to sing.

### **Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May**

Christmas may have been another disaster and you may have woken up next to a strange person, but soon you will find the love of your life and put the bad times well behind you. Most people think butter wouldn’t melt in your mouth, but the one that matters wants to see proof. A present you received at Christmas may soon prove its weight in gold. Take less.

### **Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun**

It is time you began to take better care of yourself as your health is poor and your diet is too rich. A man in a white van will make a pass at you, but are you ready for romance? Do stop putting vanity before necessity and invest in some good spectacles. A banal song will go round and round your head until you think that self-decapitation is a fair option. Buy a plant.

### **Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul**

Soon, a young lad will impress you with his willingness to learn and make you realise how much you actually don’t know. A narcissist will bore you with their constant self-hype, so maybe distance yourself from them. You are eating far too much fried food, and this is reflected in your highly rotund body. So, it could be a good time to cut down on fish and chips.

### **Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug**

Someone from the distant past who bullied you at school will reappear in your life and ask you for help – will you oblige? A beautiful person will soon enter into your life and make you feel like a million dollars, but are they just after your hard-earned money? Time to stop constantly reflecting on your life and accept that the clock is ticking. Grow a beard now.

### **Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep**

You may dream of being a huge star one day, and though this may happen, it is more likely that you are going to be struggling to pay your T.V. Licence Fee. A rich person may throw a few financial crumbs your way, but sometimes something is better than nothing. However, clouds that hover above you will soon lift and you will be showered with good fortune.

### **Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct**

This week, you will fall in love with somebody that you shouldn't and have to decide whether to proceed or graciously bail out. A much-maligned geek will help you when your computer crashes and you think you have lost all your work. You will have the privilege to boost the confidence a young person today, so, assist them as much as you possibly can.

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## **JUNE'S WORLD**

Another month has gone by, so it's time to write another article for my son Dean. I always say that I hope everyone is fit and healthy. We've had our usual visit to Selby, which is always nice and pleasant. I think people there have got used to seeing us as we visit the town every Monday. It is nice that some people have started saying "hello". Although, we don't go for people to talk to us, we go because we say that it would be nice to live in Selby. However, we like where we live in Kippax; we have lived there for over 50 years. Kippax is convenient for us as it's in easy reach of Castleford, Leeds and Garforth.

When we visited Selby today, we didn't go into the Abbey as we were late arriving there and I wanted to look around the park before all the lovely flowers had completely gone. We also went to Wetherells to look at new settees, although we have decided to wait until Spring to purchase one as our present one is still in good condition.

I'd now like to reminisce about when I was younger and living next door to my grandma and grandad. I was only young, but I used to love going next door every day. When I went round to see them, they inevitably gave me my tea. My mother seemed a bit jealous of me going round all the time, but I loved them all the same. I think my mother had a rough time bringing up five girls as my father was often away in Bedale or Leeds.

It was good having my grandad in my life because he used to make us things to play with. We had a big yard which was shared by about 10 people – it was called a community yard. My grandad made us a skipping rope out of a rope or clothes line, and we had lots of fun skipping and jumping with it.

I can also remember a lot of things that weren't too good like when I was near the river one day and someone was pulled out not breathing. He could not be saved despite efforts to revive him. Also, there was a time when someone had a heart attack and died in town; this shocked me. It's true to say that there was always something happening in Castleford.

Anyway, I'll now and try to write about more cheerful things. My auntie Phylis lived down the potteries and I liked to visit her. She used to send me to the shops to buy groceries and kindly gave me a few coppers for my trouble. Phylis was a mobile hairdresser, so when I reached thirteen or fourteen, she used to set my hair in rollers and then comb them out into a nice style. Now that I'm older, I still enjoy my life but in different ways.

Today, a Sunday, my husband and I went to a care home to see my sister-in-law. She seemed in a good frame of mind, although it's sad to see the state of some of the other residents. Since we started visited the home, three or four people have died. Unfortunately, this is what happens to older people and not just in care homes.

Since we got home from the care home, the weather has changed and it's very cold. Well, that's about it for now. I will write again next month. Love, June.

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## HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE

Written by S. Bee



Like me, I expect many readers can remember all the problems using the old red public telephone boxes.

The first problem was hunting down the right change. If I didn't have the correct coins, it meant asking a shopkeeper to change a pound note, which they were often reluctant to do and meant I had to buy something. You needed a good pile of coins ready to quickly shove in the slot when the dreaded pips went. If you were really broke, you could request a reserve charge call. It was a bit cheeky, although the unfortunate person who was covering the cost had the option of refusing to take the call, which was connected by the operator.

Do you remember the introduction of phone cards? The concept behind them was to load up the card with money beforehand, so you weren't constantly hunting for change. It was a good idea in theory, but I don't recall anyone having one handy in their wallet or purse.

When I arrived at the phone box, clutching a neat stack of coins, it was usually occupied and there was a long queue of people waiting to use it. So, I'd race to another phone box – only to find another queue there! It was no picnic waiting outside the kiosk in the rain, sleet, cold, wind, snow, and hail either and inside wasn't any warmer. If there was no queue, it'd be just my luck that I'd get behind a caller who spent thirty minutes chatting, and then they'd ask the person to ring them back. I'd be stuck there forever!

Another major problem was the smokers that had previously used the kiosk. As I pulled open the heavy door, I'd take a deep breath. Then, I'd cough my way through the call and try to make it as short as possible. Sometimes, the call didn't connect, so I'd be able to hear the person I'd rung but they couldn't hear me or vice versa. In those days, if you didn't have a landline, using a public phone was the only instant way of communication, apart from sending telegrams, which were classed as urgent.

Quite often, I'd find a kiosk vandalised, with the glass panes smashed, the door stuck ajar and the phone wire cut. As time passed, it became harder to find a public telephone that actually worked. Big, brick-like mobile phones arrived, and the thick paper Yellow Pages and telephone directories disappeared from the shelves in the kiosks and then disappeared from our homes too, as we all went digital.

Nowadays, there's lots of ways to communicate quickly – social media messages, apps, texts and emails. Landlines now are mainly used for broadband purposes. Telephone kiosks now are used as garden ornaments and even tiny community libraries. Yet, despite all their setbacks, I miss seeing their bright red presence, tucked away in our corners and displayed proudly on our high streets. There was something uniquely special about our public telephone boxes. I'm glad that I've grown up with lasting memories of this unique British icon.

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## GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ

### Questions:



- (1) Robusta and Arabica are varieties of which drink?
- (2) How many letters are there in the English alphabet?
- (3) Which American rock band released the album “Pretzel Logic” in 1974?
- (4) What is the SI unit of force?
- (5) In which English county will you find the Forest of Dean?
- (6) A sesquicentennial event occurs every how many years?
- (7) What is the largest species of cat found in South America?
- (8) At which castle was King Richard III of England born in 1452?
- (9) How many hearts does an octopus have?
- (10) What is the surname of sisters Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Lydia in the novel “Pride and Prejudice”?
- (11) On which Mediterranean island is the resort of Faliraki?
- (12) If an athlete has KSA on their vest, which country are they representing?
- (13) In 2009, which cartoon character became the first to appear as Playboy Magazine’s cover star?
- (14) According to the Paul Simon song, how many ways are there to leave your lover?
- (15) The Rock of Gibraltar is made of which kind of rock?
- (16) What was the first British film to win the Best Film Oscar in 1948?
- (17) What creature appears on the Alfa Romeo logo?
- (18) To which genus of trees do oaks belong?
- (19) Actress Valerie Hobson was married to which disgraced British politician?



(20) What name is given to the process where, below its boiling point, a liquid turns to gas?

### Answers

(1) Coffee (2) Twenty-six (3) King Robert (4) Newton (5) Gloucestershire (6) 150 years (7) Jaguar (8) Fotheringay (9) Three (10) Bennet (11) Rhodes (12) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (13) Marge Simpson (14) Fifty (15) Limestone (Shale) (16) Hamlet (17) Snake (18) Quercus (19) John Profumo (20) Evaporation

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## MORE INCREDIBLE RECIPES FROM JUNE CHARLTON



### Cornflake Biscuits

Ingredients:

5 oz of self-raising flour  
1 oz of ground rice  
3 oz of sugar  
3 oz of margarine  
Few drops of vanilla essence  
1 egg

1 oz of finely crushed, cornflakes

Method:

Put all the dry ingredients together, then rub in the margarine. Beat the egg and mix to a dough. Roll in the crushed cornflakes on both sides. Bake in the oven at 350 F/gas mark 5. Use a small cutter because the mixture spreads.



### Plain Teacakes

Ingredients:

1 lb of flour  
2 oz of lard  
½ oz of fresh yeast  
1 teaspoon of sugar  
2 teaspoons of salt  
½ pint of milk

Method:

Rub the lard into the flour. Then, warm the milk and add the sugar and crumble in the yeast. When dissolved, stir the liquid into the flour, add the salt and mix thoroughly. Leave in a cool place overnight to rise. If the teacakes are required the same day, use an ounce of yeast and

leave it to rise in a warm place. Divide the dough into 10 pieces, shape them into rounds, flatten with the hands and brush the tops with milk. Put on baking sheets and leave in a warm place for 15 minutes to rise. Dust the tops with flour, press a floured finger into the centre of each one and bake for 15-20 minutes in a hot oven.



### **West Indian Birthday Cake**

Ingredients:

6 oz of margarine  
12 oz of mixed fruit  
2 oz of ground almonds  
Pinch of salt  
1 teaspoon of mixed spices  
1 cup of milk  
3 tablespoons of dark treacle

2 oz of glazed cherries  
4 oz of mixed peel  
3 oz of soft, brown sugar  
3 eggs  
2 teaspoons of almond essence

Method:

Melt the butter and treacle – do not let it boil. Stir occasionally, then put to cool. Put all the remaining ingredients in a large mixing bowl, adding the butter and treacle last. Beat well. Line 8-9 inch cake tin with foil. Bake at 350 F/gas mark 5 for 2.5-3 hours, putting the cake at the bottom of the oven and a baking sheet or tin above the cake. Prick with a knife to see if the cake is firm.

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## **MEN'S TENNIS AFTER THE BIG FOUR – WHAT COMES NEXT?**

Written by Graham Townsend



For the last twenty years or so, the world of men's tennis has been dominated by Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray. That era is close to an end with only Djokovic remaining as an active player after the retirements of Nadal and Murray during 2024 and Federer's decision to do likewise back in 2022.

Ironically, it has just been announced that Murray will coach Djokovic at the 2025 Australian Open in January. However, this is probably not as strange as you might think. The two of them know each other very well, having played against one another since their junior days and struck up a friendship which has survived an intense rivalry over a sustained period of time.

So, who are the contenders to replace the aforementioned stars of the recent era? First on the list, due to his charisma and the fact he has already won four Grand Slam events, is Carlos Alcaraz. He already seems to be the darling of many crowds, including those at Wimbledon, and has shown his ability to adapt to most, if not all, surfaces. Due to his nationality, many see him as the natural successor to Nadal.

Another on the list is Jannik Sinner. The Italian star has two grand slam titles to his name to date and is currently the number one ranked men's player in the world. He also recently won the end of season ATP tour finals event in Turin, Italy and helped his nation to win the Davis Cup for a second successive year. As well as the victories in the 2024 Australian Open and US Open, he became only the second player ever, after Federer, to go through an entire season without suffering a straight sets defeat.

The only real question mark against Sinner is the cloud which has been hanging over him following a doping ban he received earlier in 2024 after testing positive for a banned anabolic steroid at the Indian Wells in March. He has maintained his innocence all along and, in fact, it was deemed that he was not at fault in any way for his coach administering a spray which led to the positive test. Tennis fans will be hoping this is all behind him as we move into 2025.

From a British perspective, are there any bright hopes on the horizon? The answer is an emphatic yes! 22-year-old Jack Draper reached the semi-finals of the 2024 US Open. He finished the year ranked as the world number fifteen and will be looking to break into the top ten during 2025.

So, whilst many long-term fans may be mourning the loss of some of the biggest stars the game has seen, there does appear to be plenty to look forward to as the next era of men's tennis dawns upon us.

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## BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



The octopus is a very interesting invertebrate with three hearts. It has eight limbs and is soft-bodied, squeezing through gaps when necessary. They are very intelligent creatures with excellent vision enabled through two eyes at the centre of their limbs. They possess a complex nervous system and have the ability to feel pain. They are also behaviourally diverse. Jet air is expelled through their siphon which allows propulsion and respiration.

The octopus is part of the squid and cuttlefish family. There are about 300 species with the largest being the giant Pacific octopus which has a span of up to 4.5 metres and can weigh up to 15kg. The octopus *wolffi* is the smallest octopus species with a span of 2.5 cm and weighing less than 1 g.

The octopus can be found in various parts of the ocean like coral reefs and along the seabed, living at depths according to the species. The life of most octopuses is extremely short – some live as little as six months. Fertilisation of the female's eggs usually occurs through a



specially adapted arm of the male through which he directly delivers sperm into the female's mantle cavity. The male then dies. The female, however, deposits the fertilised eggs in a den and cares for them, dying herself once they are hatched. Thus, young octopuses learn nothing from their parents as there is no parental care other than the female tending her eggs.

It is true to say that an octopus is not usually a social creature, except for mating, but remains in a home range, leaving only to find food. Their food consists of mainly crustaceans and other molluscs such as whelks and clams. It is also worth mentioning that young newly-hatched octopuses are planktonic and feed on anthropoid larvae and other zooplankton.

The main predators to octopuses include humans, fish, seabirds and sea otters. Ink is expelled to cause a distraction when a threat is posed to the octopus. They are all venomous, but only the Blue-Ringed octopus is known to be deadly to us humans. Interestingly, an octopus can replace a lost limb.

\* Ref. Wikipedia

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## ALICE'S THING OF THE MONTH!

Written by Alice Kaur



Hello and welcome back to Alice's Thing of The Month! First things first, Happy New Year and I hope this year brings amazing things for you. This month we are going to be talking about the band Ginger Root.

Ginger Root are an alternative/indie/elevator music band from Huntington Beach in California. The band members are Cameron Lew on vocals and keys, Matt Carney on drums and Dylan Hovis on bass. Cameron Lew is a multimedia artist and he creates films, videos and animation as well as being a musical artist.

I went to see Ginger Root for the first time on November 29<sup>th</sup> at Brudenell Social Club in Leeds.

It was also my first time visiting this venue. I thought it was quite nice, it had an indoor and outdoor seating area as well as two different rooms for bands to perform in. When we got let into the room, Ginger Root were performing. There was a bar and merch area, and next to it was a smaller, darker room where the band was going to play. It was small, but it felt more personal and, to my surprise, there was no barrier next to the stage when usually at gigs there is.

The doors opened at 7:30pm and the opening act King Pari arrived on stage at 8:30pm. They are another indie/alternative band from Los Angeles, California. I'd never heard of the band before, but it is always nice to listen to music. I really enjoyed their set and the lead singer had a beautiful voice. They are a two-piece band, which is quite impressive. The instruments they used were a guitar with an effects pedal, a DX drum machine, a keyboard and also a

trumpet which sounded amazing! They played for 20 minutes and were pleased by the crowd's response to them. I think they made a few new fans that night.

At 9:30pm, a projector at the back of the stage came on and a little film started to play on the screen. Ginger Root are known for making videos to play at their gigs in the interludes, as they go into new songs. The band arrived on stage and began to play to an excited crowd.

Before the gig started, the crowd were told there would be a cameraman that would need room at the front of the stage if he decided to move around. I thought they might have him filming the gig but, once it started, the cameraman was on stage dancing around the three artists, whilst the projector and three TVs at the side of the stage showed them singing and playing their instruments.

Another thing that really stood out at the gig was the lead singer Cameron. He had telephone handle hooked up to a mic that he sometimes used to sing through. It created a distorted effect and sounded like he was singing to you through an old phone. I really enjoyed this. Throughout the gig there was interludes of short films and even an animation Cameron had drawn himself. The cameraman also panned around the crowd during these interludes and people were pulling funny faces for the screens. It was a fascinating sight, and I'd never seen anything quite like it at a gig before. It definitely was a night to remember.

Cameron is quite the comedian so he would humour the crowd after finishing songs. He told a story about the troubling day they had getting to the gig and that it almost had to be cancelled! They got stuck in customs for 8 hours because they couldn't find a certain piece of paper. It was lucky the gig still happened!

Overall, it was an amazing night, and it was awesome being so close to the artists instead of being behind a barrier. I got to hear some of my favourite songs too such as "Loretta", "Loneliness", "No Problems" and "Only You". If you've never heard of Ginger Root before and they sound like your kind of thing, definitely check them out!

Thanks for reading.

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## THE EQUALITY ACT

**Written by the Anonymous Autist**

"We treat everyone with equality", the lady from the council said to me. "Doesn't matter if you're disabled, gay or straight, or live in poverty."

"We pride ourselves on our certified status as an equal opportunities provider of service."

"But, make a complaint about mistreatment from us and we'll throw you and your wheelchair under the bus."

"We'll trample your rights, and ignore all your needs. We'll tell everyone you're a terrorist who smokes lots of weed."

"We'll steal your children, and ruin your life. We'll cause so much trouble you'll leave your wife."

"And even on the off chance that we get caught, doesn't matter to us: the judge is already bought."

"That's why we don't care when we act oh so evilly. But we don't discriminate: we hate everyone equally."

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## OUR FAVOURITES

Written by S. Bee

"Our Shona says we're stuck in a rut," Tess announced in the kitchen. She was busy cooking the evening meal. She took on the cooking duties on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Her husband Jim, a retired chef, prepared and cooked the evening meal on the other days. His speciality was butternut squash risotto. It took ages to make, but it was well worth the wait. This dish was usually served on Fridays while, on Sundays, he liked to whip up a roast.

Jim, seated at the table, was reading his newspaper. Tess noted that it was the same broadsheet he'd taken for the past thirty years. He looked up.

"We're *stuck in a rut*? In what way?" As she dished up mashed potatoes, vegetable pies, peas, fresh carrots and gravy, she reflected that this was Tuesday's meal. Today was Tuesday.

"Oh, creamy vegetable pie! This is one of my favourites." Jim put his newspaper aside and eagerly scooped up his knife and fork.

As she joined him at the table, Tess recalled his question. "You remember that Shona and I met in town today for spot of retail therapy and coffee? In the cafe, she said:

"You and Jim like your routine, don't you?"

"She smiled, so she was probably teasing, but maybe my sister's got a point."

"Go on."

"When we retired, it was easy to fall into a set pattern. We've developed a habit of having certain meals on certain days. Why don't we mix up our weekly menu?"

Jim looked enthusiastic. "That's a good idea. We can think about different meals later on." Tess nodded, yet she idly wondered if it would slip their minds.

After they'd washed up, Jim switched on the TV. Instead of watching a calming gardening programme, Tess changed the TV channel, where a gritty documentary about people having tattoos had begun.

Jim shifted uneasily. "I didn't think you liked watching people getting tattooed."

"Well, it's quite an offbeat subject, isn't it? We ought to educate ourselves."

"Is this programme part of our new approach?" he asked.

“Why not?” she beamed.

“I’ll record our gardening programme, then.”

Ten minutes later, when he reached for his newspaper, Tess realised that he'd lost interest in the documentary. Actually, so had she. *They should have stuck to the gardening programme*, she thought.

Another change was a visit to the big city park. “I’ve heard it’s lovely. There’s a boating lake, lots of winding paths, a nice cafe and a pretty woodland area,” Tess explained.

“Right. Let’s go,” Jim said.

It was a sunny, pleasant Saturday when they headed out. However, they couldn’t get a seat on the train and had to stand. After the train, they waited ages for the bus, which was bursting with cheery families heading to the park. Tess realised that they should have checked the bus timetable on a travel app but, having got caught up in her enthusiasm, she’d forgotten all about it.

When they arrived at the park it was lunchtime, so Jim suggested they visit the cafe. It seemed that the families from the bus had the same idea of visiting the cafe for lunch, so there was a long queue. When Tess and Jim finally reached the chiller cabinet, the sandwiches, sausage rolls and pasties had been snapped up and, to make matters worse, the cafe didn’t serve hot meals. They made do with a cup of tea and a packet of crumbly biscuits.

“I wish I’d had the foresight to pack a picnic,” Tess remarked.

“Never mind. We might see a hot dog or burger van later,” Ted soothed, but they didn’t.

The winding paths were quite muddy, plus the woodland area was fenced off due to repair work. Jim cleared his throat, “If you don’t mind me saying, there’s nothing wrong with our local park. We’ve sat in the flower garden and watched the birds and butterflies.”

“I know, but I just fancied going somewhere different, Jim.”

He looked resigned. “Fair enough, love.”

It was a tiring journey back home and Tess got a headache. She didn’t like to admit that it had been a disappointing day.

Sticking with the breaking out of routine, Tess booked a table at an Indian restaurant.

“We usually go to the Italian on the corner,” Jim said.

“All I’m asking you to do is try a new restaurant,” she urged.

He pulled on his jacket. “Okay.”

To Tess’ surprise, Jim enjoyed the spicy, exotic dishes. She did, too. Then, she wondered if he was pretending in order to placate her. Tess was reluctant to admit it, but she’d been a bit

bossy recently and her mild-mannered, patient hubby had gone along with her. Tess needed to put things right.

“Look, I'm sorry if I've poured cold water on this change business,” Jim began as they headed home from the restaurant.

“It's me who owes you an apology,” she said, “I should have discussed the changes with you first, instead of launching straight in. I'm sorry, Jim.”

He took hold of her hand. “As you said earlier, maybe your Shona's right. We ought to branch out more. For instance, I really enjoyed that Indian meal tonight.”

“I did, too. But, we haven't got round to mixing up our meals, have we? We haven't even changed the days we cook,” she said glumly.

“No. It slipped my mind, Tess. We'll do all that but let's give the city park and TV programmes about tattoos a swerve,” he added. She nodded happily. Then, she suddenly realised – what was actually wrong with their preferences? They liked relaxing in the local park, watching their gardening programme and dining out at the Italian restaurant. She felt annoyed with Shona and annoyed with herself for not being more assertive!

“Jim and I have broken out of our routine,” Tess began, when she next met Shona. They were in their usual café. They liked their walnut and coffee cake. “But we've decided to keep some things the way they are.”

Shona stirred her tea. “Have you? Good. I didn't mean that there's anything wrong with that, Tess. It's nice that you and Jim are so cosy together.”

Tess smiled. “I know.”

“Look, let me buy chocolate cake to say I'm sorry. We know it's our favourite,” she grinned.

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## **MOTOWN'S CONTINUED INFLUENCE ON POP MUSIC**

**Written by Graham Townsend**

Depending on your age, you may or may not be aware of the popularity of Motown music. Motown was a music label founded by Berry Gordy and Quincy Jones in 1959 as Tamla Records.

It was founded in Detroit, Michigan, a city known as the “Motor City”, hence the name Motown. The label had many major artists signed to it and was particularly successful in the 1960s and early 1970s. Some of the more well-known artists associated with the label included Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson/The Jacksons, Diana Ross/The Supremes, Lionel Richie/The Commodores and Smokey Robinson.

So, what kind of music is associated with Motown? During its boom period, it was known more or less exclusively for soul music. In more recent times, the artists associated with it tend to be from hip-hop or R&B backgrounds.



In the 1980s and 1990s, we became used to many mainstream artists here in the UK covering some of the best-known Motown songs. Tracks that come to mind include “You Can’t Hurry Love” by Phil Collins and “You Keep Me Hanging On” by Kim Wilde. At the same time Smokey Robinson was still going strong and had a UK number one single with “Being with You” in 1981. Other Motown acts to be successful in that era include Rockwell (“Somebody’s Watching Me”) who is Gordy’s son, DeBarge (“Rhythm of the Night”), Shanice (“I Love Your Smile”) and Boyz II Men (“End of the Road”).

The last UK number one single on the Motown label was a remix of “I Want You Back” by the Jackson 5 in 1988. Ironically, Gordy sold Motown to MCA shortly after this success. Motown still exists and is now a part of Universal Music Group. The headquarters have been relocated several times over the years and are currently in Los Angeles.

You can clearly hear the influence and, in some cases, tracks have been sampled in more recent times. Examples I can think of are “Stop” by the Spice Girls and “Tears Dry on Their Own” by Amy Winehouse, the latter includes a sample from “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell. As a side note, that song was written by Ashford and Simpson who went on to have a big hit of their own in 1984 with “Solid”. You can also clearly hear the influence of Motown in the Pharrell Williams’ smash hit “Happy”.

Whilst Motown may not be quite the force it once was, its legacy will forever remain within the music industry.

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## **ADVENTURES OF A MAN SITTING DOWN 25 (I think)**

Wow. And, it can’t be overstated, wow!

I’m in hospital where, a week ago, I had an operation on my back to repair a tennis-ball-sized hole. I also have one on my hip. This morning, in preparation for writing this, I looked at a photo I’d asked a nurse to take for me. It’s a shock to see what a large hole in your body looks like. It requires a level of presence and acceptance. Where those qualities are found I do not know.

I’m in good hands. Two nurses just changed my bed after having found me in damp sheets. I’m sweating a lot at the moment. I’ve had breakfast. The doctors are aware of my status and are keeping an eye on my progress. However, the fact of the matter remains that that hole is in my body. There isn’t any getting away from the fact that alongside the care on offer, I’ve got to find a way to create a practice of self-care.

That is what the wow was about at the beginning. When presented with a picture of something you can’t see, you have to review your perspective. I suppose that’s not that clear. The wound, being on my hip, is slightly beyond my eye line. Hence the requested photo. It’s been there for a while. It started as a dark patch under my skin and has grown and deepened. It’s so weird to think of that. When I say a dark patch, it really was just something that looked like a bruise. Now, if I shouted into it, I’d get an echo back. Yuck. I know this is the issue after Christmas, but it’s a very Christmas-type story.

A revelatory moment creates a new perspective in someone who has lost their way. Obviously, I can’t tell you the ramifications of that change, but it has definitely happened. Seeing what the nurses and doctors are looking at day by day and calmly dealing with. Seeing

just what it is that they are having to stay positive about makes me think hard about what I need to do. So, what exactly is that? For the moment it involves eating healthy and being positive. I'm sleeping on my tummy to avoid blocking blood flow to the wound site. Phoenix, one of the nurses, calls this my 'tummy time'. It means some discomfort and also bothering the nurses to help me do the flipping. All of this plays into my own anxieties about self-worth and value. After all, who knows how much of an effect this will actually have on the progress of my healing. Still, it gives me something to focus on. It's like Scrooge buying the goose for Bob Cratchett. It isn't going to solve the problem but it's a start.

And, though this is written at the tail end of last year, that is how I am going to be thinking about the world as I go into this new year. **Health and healing. What I can do to make a change.** I don't want to have a huge team of people running around after me. There are many people in the world with far larger problems. I'd better concentrate on getting better.

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## ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



### Questions:

- (1) Who first patented chewing gum?
- (2) What nationality was the James Bond actor Sean Connery?
- (3) Who first flew kites?
- (4) Where did clay pipes originate?
- (5) What is 13 minutes past 2pm on the 24-hour clock?
- (6) What is the French word for sausage?
- (7) When was the Ming Dynasty in China?
- (8) What is the French national anthem called?
- (9) Which French team did footballer Chris Waddle play for?
- (10) What is a Mocha?
- (11) What does the German word Woche mean in English?
- (12) Who invented the windmill?
- (13) Who played the lead female role in the film Dr No?
- (14) Who is the oldest of the Attenborough brothers David and Richard?
- (15) What is the ABV of most sherries?
- (16) Where would you find your larynx?
- (17) What is the gestation period of an octopus?
- (18) What nationality was Thomas Edison?
- (19) Who invented spectacles?
- (20) What was the approximate population of Earth in 2024?

### Answers:

- (1) William F. Semple, a dentist, in 1869 (2) Scottish (3) Earliest written record of kite flying comes from China around 200 B.C. (4) North America (5) 14:13 (6) Saucisse (7) 1368 – 1644 (8) La Marseillaise (9) Olympique de Marseille (10) A coffee drink that combines espresso, steamed milk and chocolate (11) Week (12) The Greeks – Tesibius 285 – 222 B.C. (13) Ursula Andress (14) Richard (15) 15 – 22 (16) It is located in the neck, about halfway down in front of the oesophagus, and above the trachea (17) Depends on the species and the

water temperature – incubation period is 6-7 months when living in cold water (18) American  
(19) No single inventor (20) 8.2 billion

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**Editor's Final Word:** Thank you once again for taking the time and the trouble to read this e-magazine. Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert, Graham and Willow.