

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH. February 2025. Edition no 122

Hello! The first month of 2025 has elapsed; I hope you are in a good place. It's nearly a year (February 1st) since I had my heart attack and was treated so well at the Calderdale Royal Hospital, in Halifax. I seem to be doing OK now, and I am looking forward to the rest of the year and whatever it brings.

Anyone can contribute to this publication (in a non-sexist, non-racist and non-homophobic way) by contacting us at: dean@fthm.org.uk

You can view our website at: www.fromthehorsesmouth.org.uk

Best wishes, Dean.

MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

You are such a beautiful person – it's just a shame that your personality is so crap. However, your life will soon improve when you meet another superficial person. The urge to get a dog will remain, but is it really a good idea when you struggle to cope as it is? A job opportunity will present itself but maybe do

some research to see what it entails before you commit to it.

Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

Once again, you are creatively impoverished, but don't worry as your hunger to succeed will pull you through this barren patch. Soon you will fall for a married woman, so what will you do? What can you do? Christmas may be just a memory, but something you did during that period will come back to haunt you. Maybe it's a good time to try to learn to scuba dive.

Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan

You were ill some of last year, but this year will be very different with good health and many exciting adventures. It may be a good time to buy some sexy lingerie for your partner – if you know his size and colour. A letter from overseas will put a smile on your face and may well lead to new opportunities. You're worried about your weight, but be glad you're not obese.

Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb

A man who uses a stick when he doesn't need one will show he has a more honest side to his personality this week. If you are not too skint, book a holiday for later this year – you certainly deserve one! Stop daydreaming and adopt a more realistic attitude if you want to see improvements in your life. It's a good time to bake an apple pie and have it with cream.

Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar

You may be feeling conscious of your advancing years, but don't worry as you have a long way to go yet and much to experience. A toothless woman may bring joy and laughter into your life, so cherish her. Someone may start sniffing around your partner, but relax as you know your relationship is rock solid. Be nice to a foreigner as you don't know their past. Drink.

Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr

People may predict a bright future for you, however don't believe the hype as little is certain in this life. A face from the past may reappear stirring up negative feelings, so just block them out and go about your business as normal. A young woman, who some find to be minging, will catch your eye, and you will be unable to look away. Get yourself a goldfish.

Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May

Someone with a nice bottom will blow your mind, but don't make an arse of yourself and keep on walking. Christmas was good, but remember that it would be terrible if every day was Christmas. Do stop wishing for more as you already have all you need to be happy. A lady with an orange carrier bag will change your life with some information.

Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun

The arrival of a new baby in the family will bring great joy, so enjoy it. Cupid may strike and leave you in an unfamiliar situation. Life up to now may not have been a laugh-a-minute, but all that is about to change and you will find yourself rolling about in the aisles. You will go on a very long journey this year. Buy a new bra that actually fits you properly.

Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul

It may be cold at the moment but something will happen that will warm the cockles of your heart and leave you feeling dead frisky. You may not have a good self-image, but this month you will realise you are as good as anyone else – flaws and all. A huge opportunity with vast financial rewards will come your way, so consider this carefully.

Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug

Love will come knocking at your door, but are you ready for it? Are you ever ready for it? A man with a glass eye will challenge you to a game of marbles with the loser seeing their way to paying out a large sum of money. You are obsessed with your looks, but haven't you yet realised that most other people are too bothered about themselves to consider you? Relax.

Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep

Consider buying yourself a parrot so you have some company these long winter nights. A lot of people find you attractive but back off when they get a whiff of your rancid breath – improve your oral hygiene or risk being forever alone. Happily, your finances will radically improve this month after money arrives from an unexpected source. Take up a new hobby?

Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct

Something you see on T.V. will inspire you to do something creative and exciting. Someone nice may reject you this month, but this will prove to be for the best. You may be finding winter difficult this year, but remember that spring is just around the corner. Your Christmas fat may still be with you, but you are not alone in this. Stop acting like a jerk and smile.

JUNE'S WORLD



Hello, everybody. How are you all keeping? Very well, I hope.

The people we meet when we are out and about are all full of cold. I hope I've finished with colds as, like I've said before, I was in bed ill for over a week and the antibiotics that the doctor prescribed over the phone didn't seem to work. He then prescribed a different kind, which seemed to work and resulted in me feeling a lot better a couple of days later. Although it was nice being in bed and cared for by my husband, I was soon back to cooking the meals, washing and ironing etc. It was good of my husband to have helped out, though.

On Tuesday, we went to have a look around the town of Wetherby. We like to visit it every month or so. We had a meal in Morrison's café and enjoyed the experience. One of the main reasons we visit Wetherby is to buy my wider fitting shoes. They are expensive but last me a long time as they are good quality. On this occasion, we had a good look around the town, and I visited various shops. There were sales on for clothing, but I refrained from buying any of it.

The nights are getting shorter now and it has been cold, but I find if you're well wrapped up then you're fine. I quite like dark nights when you can get cosy and warm. I usually get ready for bed early and settle down to read or watch TV. I like programs like 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here'. I like Ant and Dec who do a good job presenting the show.

Recently, we bought a new car. We were advised by a mechanic in the family to get rid of our old car as it was no longer fit to drive. However, I feel more excited about getting two new sofas, which we are going to buy in the near future. We feel we deserve this as we have worked hard and have saved for such things. We are really enjoying our retirement!

Anyway, I've not much more to say until the next edition. Bye for now.

June

A PRESSING MATTER

Written by S. Bee

After I'd let myself into Kerry's house, I took off my shoes and placed them in the hall on the shoe rack. I hung up my jacket on the coat hook too, then I headed towards the kitchen. I discovered that my new employer, Kerry, had left me a note. *Hi, Sally. Don't worry if you can't get through the pile today. Everything's set up for you in the living room. Help yourself to tea, coffee and biscuits.*

At the interview, Kerry had explained that with her and her hubby's busy careers and their two teenage boys studying at college, their spare time was precious. Kerry didn't want to spend her weekends ironing the family's clothes. This is where I came in.

Her former ironer was my neighbour, who had mentioned this job to me before she relocated. Kerry was pleased to find someone suitable so soon. I'd be working a two-hour weekly shift. I was happy to fit this little job around my part-time position at the dental surgery. I was a receptionist there.

In the living room, I found an ironing board and iron, a clothes rail with hangers on and a heap of crumpled garments on the sofa. I switched on the radio and the iron, and I got started. The radio was tuned into a golden oldies station. I loved singing along to the chart hits from the 1970's and 1980's. As I started ironing, I began to reflect.

I really liked my regular job, even though sometimes it could be hectic and stressful. I had a good, reliable bunch of colleagues and my manager, Brenda, was firm yet fair. I would have asked for more hours, but all the admin staff were part-time and on different rotas, so it was a pointless request. To help keep my head above water, I also had a lodger. Lisa was a 25-year-old full-time office worker.

However, I had a problem...

I paused mid-song when I heard the back door open and someone walk in and through the house. A female voice called out.

"Hello!" A jean-clad, friendly-looking woman of around 40 (around my age) appeared at the doorway.

"Oh, hello," I stuttered.

"You must be Sally. I'm Cassie. I live next door. I've got a key. I'm good friends with Kerry. I just want to welcome you and see if you've settled in."

My heart warmed. That was kind of her. I smiled, "I'm pleased to meet you, Cassie."

"You too. Shall I make us a coffee? Kerry only has instant, I'm afraid."

"That's fine. Just milk for me, please."

It would be nice to have a bit of company, I thought. Five minutes later, Cassie brought in

two mugs and placed them on the coffee table. When she took a seat in an armchair, I decided not to take a break and press on with my task. We chatted about general things. Then, Cassie told me that she was a professional counsellor who worked from home.

A thought struck me. “Could I talk to you about a problem?”

She shifted uneasily, “Well, that depends on the problem.”

“It's not in-depth,” I added hastily. “It's about my lodger, Lisa. She borrows my clothes without asking me first. It's getting annoying and...”

Cassie held up a hand, stopping me in my flow. “Did you set clear boundaries when she moved in?”

I pulled a face. “I wasn't keen on issuing official rules and regulations. It might have put her off.”

“It's your home, Sally. Remember, you invited her to share it with you. This lodging arrangement must suit you both. Have you asked her to stop borrowing your clothes?”

“No, because I don't want to upset her.”

Cassie looked thoughtful. “I know it's a daunting prospect but try and find the courage to bring this up. Practice what you're going to say to Lisa beforehand. If you feel silly doing this, you could pretend that you're an actress learning lines.”

I nodded. It was a sensible course of action. We continued to chat for a while, then Cassie drained her mug and glanced at the clock.

“Well, I have to go. I have a client due. Let me know how you get on with Lisa next week. Bye for now!”

I mulled over Cassie words. It was easy to say “try and find the courage” but for me, it was very difficult. I was an anything-for-a-quiet-life person. At work, my calm, serene nature was a valuable asset. I was able to soothe nervous patients before they began any dental treatment. I admit that I shied away from the awkward, demanding people. *My manager, Brenda, must have noticed this too*, I thought.

When I arrived home, Lisa was out at work. I discovered that she'd borrowed two jumpers and a skirt. I found them in her wardrobe and reclaimed them. I sighed. Cassie was right – I should have set clear boundaries. Somehow, I needed to summon the confidence to do this. Well, I reasoned, why not see it as a challenge, rather than an issue to be dreaded and avoided?

It was later that day and Lisa and I were preparing the evening meal. It was bangers, mash and peas. I took a deep breath. I'd taken Cassie's advice and practised my “lines” beforehand.

“Look Lisa, I'm sorry if you don't want hear this, but I'd prefer it if you stopped borrowing my clothes.”

I gulped. I'd actually done it! Stated what I wanted to say. It was a major achievement.

She shrugged. "Oh, I didn't think you'd mind. We all shared clothes at my last flat share."

"It's not something I'm used to doing. I hope I haven't upset you?"

She waved the potato peeler. "No, of course not! Is there anything else you'd like to bring up?"

I considered. "If you could fetch the used mugs, glasses and plates from your room and wash them up, that'd be great."

She nodded. "I'll do that now."

And, amazingly, she did! I went on to set gentle rules and Lisa was fine with everything.

After that success, I was buzzing. I decided to ask about full-time hours at the dental surgery. Even though she was friendly and down-to-earth, it was still an intimidating prospect approaching Brenda. I chose my time carefully. Thursday afternoons were usually pretty slack. I knocked on her office door and set out my stall.

"Your timing is spot on, Sally," Brenda said. "A member of staff has just handed in her notice. I'm sure the team will be happy for you to take her shift. Look, I hope you don't mind me saying this, but I feel that we need to work on your assertiveness skills."

I nodded. I knew Brenda was right.

"If we asked you to attend a confidence building course, would you be okay doing that? The company will cover the cost."

I beamed. "I'll look forward to it!"

I was also looking forward to updating Cassie next week!

GRAHAM'S MONTHLY QUIZ

Questions:



- (1) Which former president of the United States died at the age of 100 in December 2024?
- (2) Who became the youngest ever PDC darts World Champion in January 2025?
- (3) What is the capital of Gabon?
- (4) What do female mosquitoes drink as a source of protein for their eggs?
- (5) Which poet and politician kept a bear in his dormitory at Cambridge University?

- (6) Which Canadian vocalist provided backing vocals on the 1986 US number two hit single “Don’t Forget Me (When I’m Gone)” by Glass Tiger?
- (7) What breed of dog is Snoopy?
- (8) Which twins featured in the US sitcom Full House, playing the character Michelle Tanner?
- (9) Which painting has a mailbox in the Louvre so it can receive love letters?
- (10) Which bakery item gets its name from the weight of each ingredient used to make it?
- (11) What nationality was Cleopatra?
- (12) What is the chemical name for water?
- (13) Douglas Engelbart invented the first of which type of computer accessory in 1964?
- (14) 75% of the human brain is composed of what?
- (15) Which planet is the only one to spin clockwise?
- (16) What is the real name for a hashtag?
- (17) What is the hardest bone in the human body?
- (18) What is the name for a single strand of spaghetti?
- (19) Which is the only continent to span all four hemispheres?
- (20) Which Mexican became an artist after she was bedridden from an accident?

Answers

- (1) Jimmy Carter (2) Luke Littler (3) Libreville (4) Blood (5) Lord Byron (6) Bryan Adams (7) Beagle (8) Olsen Twins (9) Mona Lisa (10) Pound Cake (11) Greek (12) Dihydrogen Monoxide (13) Mouse (14) Water (15) Venus (16) Octothorpe (17) Femur (18) Spaghetti (19) Africa (20) Frida Kahlo

BRENDA’S WILDLIFE CORNER

Rhinoceros



There are five species of rhinoceros, commonly abbreviated to rhino:

1. The white (African) rhino

This species has a very large body with males weighing up to 2,400 kg and females 1,600 kg. It can be split up into two subspecies which are the Southern White rhino and the Northern White rhino, which

live in the south and north of the African continent, respectively. It possesses two horns, the front one being larger, and has a flat, broad mouth for grazing.

2. The black (African) rhino

The male weighs up to 1,600 kg with the females being smaller than the males. It usually has two horns, although a third may grow, and has a pointed mouth which is ideal for feeding on leaves and twigs. There are four subspecies of black rhino in Africa which are South-central, South-western, East African and West African.

3. The Indian rhino

The Indian rhino is comparable in size to the white rhino with males weighing between 2,500 kg and 3,200 kg. It has a single horn and, due to human encroachment, now only exists in restricted grasslands and forests in several protected areas of Nepal and India.

4. The Sumatran rhino

This is the second-most threatened rhino in the world with only 275 believed to be left. It possesses two horns and is much smaller than other species of rhino weighing about 700 kg. The males are much larger than females. The Sumatran rhino is relatively hairy and is found at extremely high altitudes in Sumatra and Borneo. Its numbers have drastically been reduced through poaching and loss of habitat.

5. The Javan rhino

This is the most endangered species of rhino with only 60 thought to be left in the wild. It is hairless and only has one horn on the males whilst this is absent on the female. The Javan rhino likes tall grass, dense lowland rainforest and reed beds. It weighs between 900 kg and 1,400 kg and has been hunted for the supposed medical powers of its horns and blood.

Humans are the biggest threat to rhinos who are particularly vulnerable when drinking at water holes. Horrifically, some have been tranquillised, dehorned and left to bleed to death. Horns are used in medicine in Asia and also to make dagger handles in Oman and Yemen. Poaching is also driven by huge demand for rhino horns in countries like Vietnam.

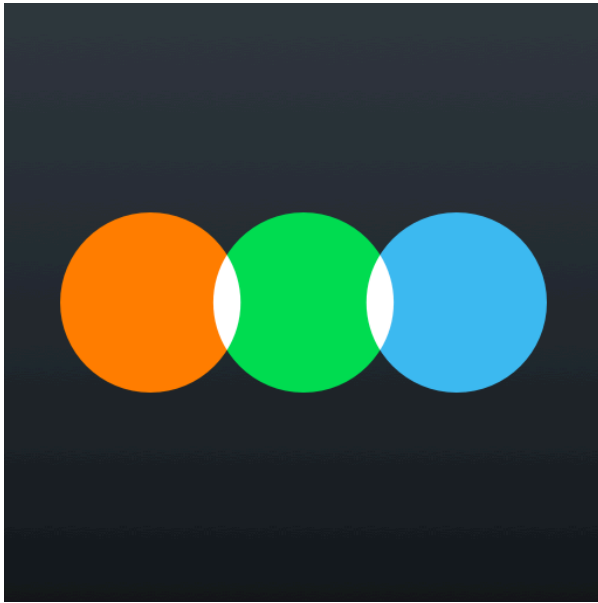
A rhino's horn is made of keratin, and there is no plausible evidence of its health benefits to humans. A rhino has a small brain relative to its body size, thick protective skin and three toes on each foot. A rhino's diet depends on the species, with some being browsers, but all feed on low quality vegetation. Rhinos spend most of their time foraging for food.

An adult male tends to be a solitary creature as do females of the Asian species, although some species, like white rhinos, come together to form groups. Rhinos mate with multiple partners and males determine the reproductive status of females by tasting their urine!

Pregnancy lasts for differing periods. For instance, it lasts 460 days for a black rhino and 504 days for a white rhino. A female likes to give birth in a secluded area and can be aggressive after having a calf. A calf is capable of standing up within 30 minutes of being born and takes milk from its mother within 2 hours of birth. A rhino takes between 5-8 years to become sexually mature, though this can be much longer for a male white rhino.

Steps have been taken to protect rhinos from ruthless poachers, for example armed park rangers being employed in places like South Africa. Consequently, some poachers have been killed whilst poaching.

ALICE'S THING OF THE MONTH!



Written by Alice Kaur

Hello and welcome back to Alice's Thing of The Month! This Month, we are going to be talking about Letterboxd.

Letterboxd is an app that allows you to log and track all the films you have watched throughout the year. It also allows you to rate films, put films on a watchlist and share lists of films. It is like a social media platform but just for film lovers. I discovered it in 2022 when I started to watch a lot of films. I've always loved film and getting lost in new worlds and having this app is a perfect way to track everything I have watched.

Letterboxd launched in 2011 by two web designers from New Zealand called Matthew Buchanan and Karl Von Randow. They created it as a passion project, and it was later debuted at a web conference in New York. They say their inspiration comes from other platforms such as Flickr, a website where you can upload your photography and Last.FM another website where you can listen to and track music.

Over the years, Letterboxd has gained popularity and many celebrities including Margot Robbie, Charli XCX, Olivia Rodrigo and Martin Scorsese use it. As of June 2024, Letterboxd has over 14 million users. The app became more popular during the COVID-19 Pandemic as everyone was having to spend time at home, so it gave people more time to do indoor activities such as watching films.

It is my favourite form of social media as I am a huge film fan and it doesn't have any negative impact on my mental health like an ordinary social media app such as Instagram or Facebook. You can interact with other users by either following them or commenting on their film reviews. Letterboxd doesn't have a function to upload photos or share your status; it is just a simple app where you can enjoy logging films. On the top of your profile you can add your top 4 favourite films. My current ones are *Whiplash*, *Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind*, *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Punch-Drunk Love*. It shows other users what kind of films you are interested in, and you can change these any time you like.

The app is free within itself but if you would like extra perks you can upgrade to a 'pro' or 'patron' account. These both require subscriptions. It is £16 for 'pro' and £52 for 'patron', which I think is a huge price difference. These are the prices for a full year. The benefits included in the 'pro' account are a personalised annual and all time stats, username changes, pinning content to your profile, duplicating lists, bulk tag management, and getting notified of films releasing from your watchlist. The 'patron' account benefits include those listed above and the additional functions of picking your favourite film posters, adding backdrops to your profile, reviews and lists, your name "in lights" on the app's Patrons page, early access to beta features and a thanks from the Letterboxd company for supporting them.

I did get myself a 'pro' account last year, and I mostly like the fact that I am supporting the company that has made the app I love so much. I feel the prices are a bit ridiculous, and I see it as a bit of a status symbol for some to show off they have a 'pro' or 'patron' account. I hope that someday they can make all this free so everyone can enjoy the app equally.

Another fun thing I enjoy about the Letterboxd community is people create their own prompts for different months of the year. For January this year, I have decided to join one called "Japanuary" which is watching 31 different films created by Japanese directors. This could be one film a day or multiple a day depending on how much time you have for films. I also enjoy one called "Hooptober" in October which is a Halloween prompt where you can again watch 31 different horror films by different directors throughout the month. I enjoy doing these because it introduces me to lots of different directors, cultures and genres of film. This year, I am wanting to watch more World Cinema films. I want to learn about different societies and ways of life I have never seen before. I also enjoy films with subtitles as listening to people speak in different languages is beautiful.

Going on Letterboxd makes me feel like a real 'film critic' and I really enjoy it. Sometimes I like to write sarcastic, witty reviews and sometimes I write serious ones. One of my favourite reviews I wrote was for *Barbie* (2023), which got 63 likes. People can 'like' your reviews if they view them. I don't write my reviews for other people but for myself. I like to be honest about film and if there is something I don't like, I am not afraid to admit it. Films are ranked from ½ a star to 5 stars on Letterboxd. It isn't often I give ½ a star to any films unless they are exceptionally bad. Last year, I mostly logged 3-star films, which I see as an average rating. I only give 5 stars to films I really love. Last year, I logged 53 films with a 5-star rating.

I feel some films are overrated on Letterboxd. I have witnessed this a few times, and I haven't understood the hype behind them. I have decided not to trust the 'average rating' of films on Letterboxd as some low-rated films I have loved. A thing to remember if you're thinking of downloading the app is that everyone has their own opinion and everyone thinks they are right. so I would take people's opinions and reviews with a pinch of salt – mine included.

I am excited for 2025 in the film world and all the new releases. My most anticipated films are *Mickey 17*, *A Complete Unknown*, *Nosferatu*, *A Real Pain* and *Thanksgiving 2*, just to name a few.

Thanks for reading!

PUNK ROCK

Written by Graham Townsend



Punk Rock. What was it? When and how did it come about? These are the things we are going to look at in this article, along with the current scene.

Punk music is often seen as being raw and stripped back in terms of the number of guitars used and the fact that only one or two chords are played in many instances.

Many believe that this movement, for want of a better word, was borne out of frustration at a stagnant music scene in the UK in the 1970s. People seemingly had had enough of glam rock and progressive rock, which had filled the gap left after the end of the 60s era and the demise of The Beatles. Punk is also often seen as evolving from the socio-economic unrest in

the mid-1970s in the UK. However, the first punk bands probably came from the scene in New York and centred on clubs such as CBGBs.

The Ramones, who I am a big fan of, are often cited as the first true punk band. They were formed in New York City in 1974. All four original members of the band, including lead singer Joey Ramone, have now sadly passed away. They are best known for songs such as “Blitzkrieg Bop”, “Sheena is a Punk Rocker”, “Rockaway Beach”, “Do You Wanna Dance” and the surprisingly laid-back “Baby I Love You”, which is probably seen as their finest moment by the mainstream public. Other US acts associated with the punk scene include New York Dolls, Black Flag (who featured Henry Rollins as frontman in the 1980s), The Stooges (featuring Iggy Pop), Patti Smith, The Cramps and The Dead Kennedys.

In the UK, when people are asked to name a punk band the most common answer would likely be the Sex Pistols. Always surrounded by controversy and managed by Malcolm McLaren, they were formed in 1975 and were fronted by the snarling, spitting and very confident Johnny Rotten (aka John Lydon). They were as well known for their foul-mouthed appearance on the Today show with Bill Grundy as they were for their anarchistic music. Anthems such as “Pretty Vacant” and “God Save the Queen” were tracks that strongly resonated with the disillusioned members of British youth at the time. Other UK bands classed as punk bands, who were popular during the same time period, included The Clash, The Damned and The Stranglers. These bands were all more talented musicians in this writer’s humble opinion.

More modern acts who are classed as punk or pop-punk bands include the likes of Green Day and Offspring. Both bands have been around since the late 80s/early 90s and have mainstream appeal due to some of their more commercial materials. Green Day’s song “American Idiot” was a massive hit. It was clearly commenting on the political scene in the US at the time of its release. The last ten or fifteen years have seen the emergence of more bands with a fresher approach to the genre. Bands such as Sleaford Mods, Mobs, Fontaines D.C. and Idles can be counted among this number. The latter are particularly known for their politically motivated lyrics.

I hope you have enjoyed this look at a musical genre which has caused some division amongst music fans for over fifty years now. One thing is for sure, it is not going away.

FOUR MORE OUTSTANDING RECIPES FROM JUNE CHARLTON



Spaghetti Bolognese

Ingredients:

- 1 oz of butter
- Pinch of salt
- 2 oz of mushrooms
- 1 onion
- 1 or 2 carrots
- 6 – 8 oz of minced meat
- 1 small tin of tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of tomato puree
- ½ pint of stock
- Pepper
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil

Method:

Lightly fry minced beef in butter and a small amount of oil. Add chopped mushrooms, onions and grated carrot. Stir in meat and simmer. Add stock and remaining ingredients. Cook until thick. Serve on spaghetti and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.



Steamed Jam Pudding

Ingredients:

- 4 oz of flour
- 2 oz of sugar
- 2 oz of suet
- 2 tablespoons of milk
- 3 tablespoons of jam or lemon cheese/curd

Method:

Mix the dry ingredients together, then add milk. Put jam or lemon cheese at the bottom of a greased basin. Add the mixture, which must be stiff, cover and steam for 1 ½ hours. Have ready boiling water in a large pan, pudding covered and securely tied. Stand the basin on perforated rack or 2 skewers, with boiling water two thirds up the basin. Fit lid. Ensure the water is boiling throughout and replenish as required.



Dumplings

Ingredients:

4 oz of self-raising flour
2 oz of suet
¼ teaspoon of salt
Bit of pepper

Method:

Mix the dry ingredients thoroughly. Add cold water to make a fairly stiff dough. Divide into 8-10 dumplings into a stew for the last 20 minutes, making sure that the stew does not go off the boil. Keep lid on the saucepan.



Gingerbread

Ingredients:

12 oz of self-raising flour
6 oz of margarine
4 oz of caster sugar
2 eggs
4 tablespoons of milk
3 tablespoons of golden syrup
1 tablespoon of black treacle

1 ½ level teaspoons of ground ginger
Pinch of cinnamon
Pinch of salt
Pinch of mixed spice

Method:

Grease tin. Then, sieve flour, salt and spices. Place milk, sugar, syrup, treacle and margarine in a pan. Leave over a gentle heat to melt, but do not allow it to become very hot. Pour melted mixture into the flour. Beat well. Add lightly beaten eggs and beat until the mixture is smooth. The consistency should be that of a thick batter. Add a little milk if required. Pour into the prepared tin and bake at 375-400 F.

COBBLES AND CLEVERCLOGS

Written by S. Bee

I live in the borough of Calderdale in West Yorkshire. One of our most famous literary figures is the poet Ted Hughes. He hailed from Mytholmroyd, a small district along the Calder valley, which was once a peaceful rural hamlet. You can just about spot the traces of delight and charm that once inspired the former poet Laureate.

Another local literary figure is Anne Lister (1791-1840), a traveller, landowner, businesswoman and diarist. Five miles from my home town lies Shibden Hall, in Halifax. Once Anne's home, it's been open to the public for many years. I should imagine it's attracted more visitors since scriptwriter Sally Wainwright's highly popular TV drama series

Gentleman Jack was broadcast. Anne was both clever and creative. In her diary, she created a unique code in order to disguise the description of her saucy encounters! Part of her vast country estate is now the leafy Shibden park, with its pleasant grassy slopes and boating lake. The park cafe provides a brief history about Anne, which is displayed on the cafe walls.

Sally also set her other two dramas, *Last Tango in Halifax* and *Happy Valley*, in Calderdale. These are mainly filmed in and around the town of (yes, you've guessed it) Halifax, yet they've also taken footage from other towns in Calderdale including Ripponden, Heptonstall, Todmorden, Sowerby Bridge, Elland and Hebden Bridge. Linda Green, the novelist, also lives in Hebden bridge.

Moving on from Calderdale towards the city of Bradford, literary tourists like to visit the Bronte vicarage in the pretty village of Haworth. Bradford was also where *An Inspector Calls* author and playwright J.B Priestly was born.

Further afield, yet still in West Yorkshire, we had the highly successful TV screenplay writer, the late Kay Mellor who worked and lived in Leeds. Kay set her dramas in Leeds, Bradford and the seaside resort of Scarborough, situated on the North Yorkshire coast. The TV, stage, and film dramatist, Leeds lad Alan Bennett doesn't live in West Yorkshire. The clever clogs skipped off to London with his first taste of success. He does have a place in the Yorkshire Dales though, so I guess we can let him off!

Incidentally, the prolific stage playwright Alan Ayckbourn resides in Scarborough. On holiday, I once spotted him outside the theatre! Alan's plays usually debut at the Stephen Joseph theatre, based in the town.

So, you see, Yorkshire holds its fair share of scribblers. As a Yorkshire lass and a bit of a scribbler myself, I'm quite proud of that!

MONEY IN SPORT



Written by Graham Townsend

This is a subject that many people have views on, therefore I thought I would take a look at the impact money has on the world of sport, both the pros and cons.

Football is probably a good place to start as it is the sport that causes the most debate when it comes to money in sport in the UK. The major issue seems to be the enormous weekly wages that the top Premier League players receive. Many people perceive this to be out of proportion in relation to those who work just as hard, if not harder, in jobs or roles that are considered to be vital to everyday society, such as doctors, nurses and firemen.

However, it's not purely down to the amounts the players get paid. It's also down to how the clubs use the money they receive from TV deals, for example. It is not always seen to be used for the betterment of the game, and it doesn't seem to feed down to the grassroots level, those

who feed them with the players they need to keep the Premier League at the top of the tree when it comes to entertainment. There is also the issue of too many foreign players taking the opportunities of young British players. This is often to the long-term detriment of the national team.

Whilst the role of money in sport means we often get to see the best of the best competing against each other at the highest level, which is great for the fans, another spectre looming on the horizon is the involvement of countries such as Saudi Arabia or Qatar who seem to be using sport as a way of encouraging people to visit their country. It seems they are doing this to hide other unpleasant aspects of their society that they want you to forget about. Their Public Investment Fund (PIF) has already become involved in many sports, most notably football, boxing and golf, to move some of the biggest sporting events in the world to their nations. The term used to describe their actions has come to be known as “sports washing”.

Some sports have benefitted massively from significant investment. The one that comes to mind is darts – whether it is a sport or a game, like snooker, is a totally different question that can be saved for another day. Working class people are now able to reap large rewards for their skills that, in the past, would have gone largely unrecognised. Now, people like Luke Littler and Luke Humphries have become more or less household names in the UK.

As you can see sport does need money, however it must not be allowed to destroy the fabric of many sports as it is threatening to do so across the world.

ADVENTURES OF A MAN SITTING DOWN – TWENTY SOMETHING



Self-management. It’s a thing. I’ve heard of it. I’ve seen other people doing it. I know it’s possible. Can I do it? Not if this article is anything to go by. Or is that, in fact, true? I got a phone call at about 2PM this afternoon.

“Did you manage to get something written?” Came the soft voice from the other end.

“Yikes!” I said. “The deadline’s today isn’t it. How long have I got?” The answer was 12 tonight. It’s now 11:32.

Will someone be sitting up waiting for me to email this over? Who can say? Well, the editor, but we’ll only know for sure if you’re reading this in the February issue. The thing is I can come up with 500 words before 12AM. I can even make them interesting. The area that concerns me is the guilt I feel as my fingers fly across the keyboard. I feel like I’ve done wrong by that mysterious voice that called to me. In truth I haven’t. Let’s unpick this a bit.

I’m still in hospital. It’s been somewhere in the region of two months after I wrote my last article. In that time, I’ve been cut open and healed. I’ve spent Christmas here. I’ve watched lives change. Most importantly, I’ve discovered that I am responsible for my care, even in an environment where other people are charged with undertaking that duty. They may be paid to do it, but I’m the one who will have to live with the results. What has come to light for me is that there is a necessary soft approach that is an underbelly to the structured, organised job of

healing. I have to step-up and take control. Sometimes, this has to be done with not spare time.

This morning, for example, I had to take charge of a daily routine so that I can be confident of how I do it when I'm discharged, which should be happening next week. I was woken at six by the nurse charged with the job. Half asleep and not feeling up to the task, I had to explain to her what I'd been told by the discharge nurse about preparing to be released back out into the world. Luckily, she was receptive and I was able to undertake the job with her blessing. It doesn't always work like that, I guess. That is the thing that self-management is really all about. You can have a plan and it might work. Be assured though, it is more likely that some contingency will come into play. As it did today when I had interruption after interruption, causing me to delay getting round to writing this until, on the cusp of going to sleep, I remembered my promise the owner of that mystery 2PM voice to write something for this issue.

Here it is just 25 words away from an acceptable word count. The thing is sometimes the boundaries are fluid and sometimes they aren't real. So, all I can say is that if you're reading this, I was able to work within a real boundary to display an excellent job of self-management. However, you may be reading this in next month's issue. Which just goes to show that the initial statement was true. I hope the editor and me have the same understanding of boundaries. I guess we'll find out eventually.

ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



Questions:

- (1) Which country produces the most denim jeans?
- (2) What is the capital of Switzerland?
- (3) Who played the main male lead role in the film 'Cool Hand Luke'?
- (4) What is a cyst?
- (5) What is the French word for step sister?
- (6) Who manufactures the Jazz model of car?
- (7) What is the name of the stick that a shepherd uses to manage and catch sheep?
- (8) What is the German word for penis?
- (9) Who wrote the song: White Christmas?
- (10) Who invented the portable, electric vacuum cleaner?
- (11) What is the currency of New Zealand?
- (12) What is a stool pigeon?
- (13) Who won the women's 1500m swimming freestyle at the 2024 Olympics?
- (14) Where was Frank Sinatra born?
- (15) Who won Strictly Come Dancing 2022?
- (16) What is Dopamine?
- (17) Where was the legendary Shea Stadium (where the Beatles played) situated?
- (18) Which two countries mainly contest the Kashmir region?
- (19) What is a Deacon?
- (20) Which Shakespeare play does Brutus appear in?

Answers:

(1) China (2) Bern (3) Paul Newman (4) It is a closed, abnormal pocket of fluid, semi-solid material, or other substance that can form in the skin or internal organs (5) belle soeur (6) Honda Motor Company (7) Crook (8) Penis (9) Irving Berlin (10) James Murray Spangler (11) Pound Sterling (12) A person acting as a decoy or informer (13) Katie Ledecky (14) Hoboken, New Jersey, US (15) Hamza Yassin and Jowita Przystal (16) A chemical messenger, or neurotransmitter, that's produced in the brain and affects many parts of the body (17) Queens, New York, US (18) India and Pakistan (19) A member of the clergy who assists in the ministry of a church, alongside priests and bishops (20) Julius Caesar

Editor's Final Word: Thank you so much for taking the time and the trouble to look at this publication. I do hope you feel inspired to contact us at: dean@fthm.org.uk
Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert, Graham and Willow.