

MARCH 1974

3p

Harlequin

Leisure Magazine of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Research Group and Associated Organisations



In this issue

PROTECT YOUR TOWN'S HERITAGE — EVERYMAN'S FRIEND
FIRST AID QUESTIONNAIRE — THE THINGS THEY WRITE
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"HARLEQUIN" is dependent upon its readers for most of the material published; its quality can only reflect the quality of the material submitted. Only through your support can it be developed to its full potential.

COVER PICTURE

A view of Didcot Power Station and AERE Harwell from Scutchamer Knob

Photo Ted Norvell



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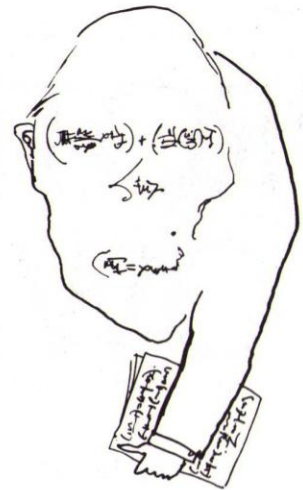
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by ffolkes

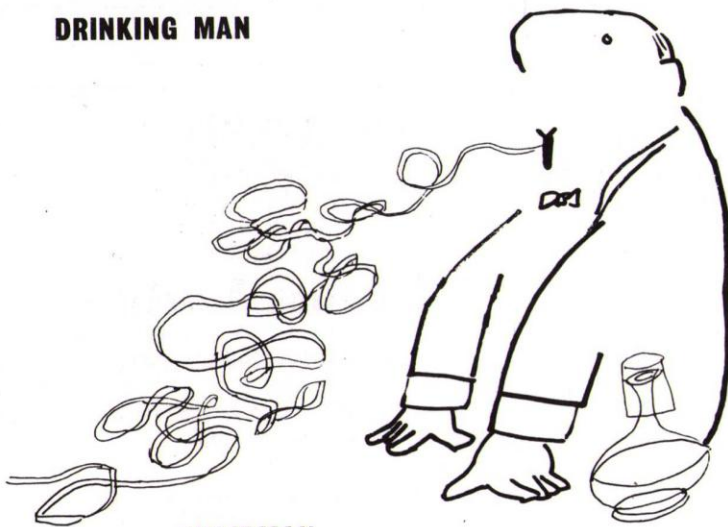
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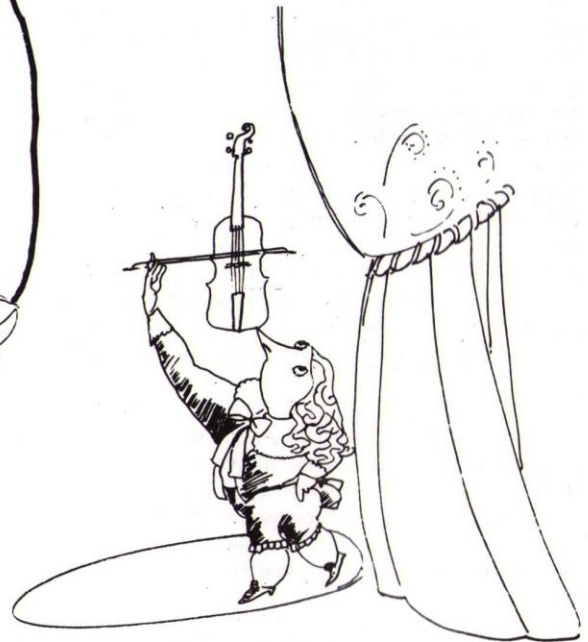
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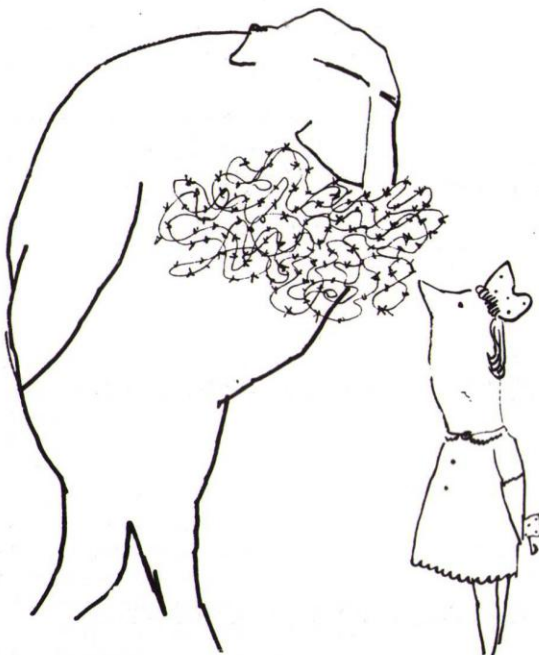
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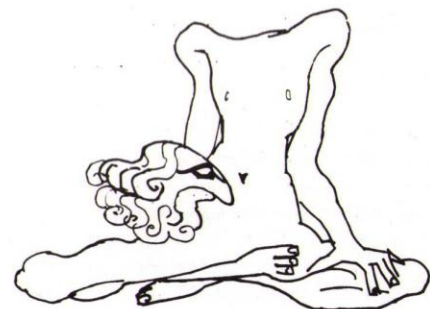
CHAIRMAN



CHILD PRODIGY



UNCLE



MYSTIC

If you are interested in local history study the example set by the Friends of Wantage Museum.

PROTECT YOUR TOWN'S HERITAGE!

by RALPH ATHERTON, Biochemistry

Wherever we live, the pressures of development and modernisation threaten the heritage of the past. I believe that each area needs a group of people studying their local history and attempting to prevent indiscriminate destruction of the past. I suggest, not that all that is old is good, but that we should be sure to distinguish good from bad in both old and new. The lives of our forefathers, besides providing an absorbing study, should help us to build the future on the experience of the past. I even have an ally, I am told, in Chairman Mao, who wrote in his Little Red Book "Let the past serve the present". (I hasten to assure the Security Officer that I am not a Maoist in any other way!)

I will illustrate these ideas by describing the activities of the Friends of Wantage Museum. I hope it will encourage people to join or form such societies in their own areas. Let me first explain how Wantage Museum came into existence and who exactly the Friends are.

In 1958 the Wantage U.D.C. resolved to establish a museum in the town and the Wantage Museum Committee, a sub-committee of the U.D.C., was formed. The project suffered several setbacks but eventually, in April 1972 the present Museum, which is in the Victoria Cross Gallery, was opened. On this occasion, Don Alexander (of Housing Dept.) suggested that it would be a good idea if the Museum could be supported by a body of 'Friends'. Jean Naish, the Museum Committee chairman, invited Kathleen Phillip, the well-known Wantage historian, to explore the possibility of forming a society to be called the 'Friends of Wantage Museum'. A number of interested people met together and formed a steering committee. The first A.G.M. of the Friends

was in January 1973, when a constitution was adopted and a committee elected with Miss Phillip as Chairman, Val Cotton as Hon. Secretary and Miss M. Hoddinott as Treasurer.

The Friends were founded to promote a dynamic interest in the Museum and to support the Museum Committee in presenting a balanced picture of the historical development of Wantage and the surrounding area. To help in achieving these aims the Friends decided:

1. to initiate the recording of old buildings, particularly those threatened with demolition.
2. to encourage a wider interest in local history by organising lectures and other activities
3. to carry out selected research projects
4. to assist the Museum financially and in obtaining material for exhibition.

The Friends had a very successful first year. Early in 1973 a number of members formed active working groups. Faced with the imminent demolition of many of the older properties in the town, Janie Cottis founded the Building Recording Group, which began photographing and measuring buildings, helped by advice from Norman Gray of Abingdon Archaeological Society.

The former "Crown", on the north side of the Market Square, had already been, to quote Sir John Betjeman, "carted away by developer's lorry". However, the demolition men did leave behind some 17th and 18th century clay pipes, and two old wells were also recorded. Four houses were measured on the site leading off Mill St., but unfortunately the Council was unable to grant the Friends access to these before demolition; we know that all were partly timber-framed and that the middle house was cruck-framed, one of the few examples Wantage possessed. In the autumn one of the Elm Cottages

was recorded; these terraced artisan houses are becoming rare. Badger's shop, a typical town house of the 17th and 18th centuries on a long narrow plot, was also recorded.

Our other aim is to record buildings of great local interest and value to the character of the town, hoping to amass evidence that will prevent hasty and unnecessary destruction in the future. The first building recorded for this purpose was William Wise's house on the corner of the Market Square and Newbury St., now divided into three. The Wantage Camera Club is helping the Friends by photographic survey work.

The Building Recording Group now has six active members, Norman Adams and Jean Bamford putting in many extra hours of work drawing up plans. New members of the group are always welcomed. People with a fetish for damp, dirty cellars and dark, dusty attics will be in their element.

Related to this work was the fight to save the Stirlings Stable Block. The voices of the Friends were transmitted through our Chairman and Secretary, whose efforts played an important rôle in saving this historic building.

The writer, a keen genealogist, gained the reputation of being something of a ghoul, through being seen so often in the churchyard and interior of Wantage Parish Church and in the Baptist Cemetery in Garston Lane. Since tombstones sink a considerable depth into the earth over the centuries, the transcribing of inscriptions required much spade-work, mostly at dusk. In Garston Lane gravestones dating from 1692 were found, including those of several prominent 17th-century townsmen. Significant advances in our knowledge of the early Baptist church resulted from this work. In the parish churchyard



The writer probes the inscription on an old tombstone in his hunt for information about early Wantage residents.

the gravestones dated from 1688 and revealed much of Wantage's people and history. The inscriptions are important and often unique historical documents. Unfortunately the ravages of the elements and of man cause many to be lost each year, and so all burial grounds that have not been transcribed should be tackled as soon as possible.

Other members are engaged in cartographical studies of the area and in locating local relics of all types.

The Friends organised several activities in 1973. In March Mrs. Mary Whipple entertained us with a talk on church brasses, illustrated by many of her brass rubbings. Mr. Entwistle, who lives in an old Grove mill, gave us a fascinating account of watermills in June. In July we held an historical exhibition in the parish church during the Festival of Flowers, so stimulating much interest in local history. In the autumn Jack Dalby (of AWRE) described and illustrated how he and Reg Wilkinson (of MRC) explored the darkest and dankest regions of Wiltshire and Berkshire to study the history of the canal. December saw Don Steel, the eminent genealogist, describing the fascinations of "Family History".

1974 has already seen much activity. Light relief at the A.G.M. in January was provided by Dr. Hulse with a slide-show quiz of Wantage villages. Kathleen Phillip was re-elected Chairman and Alan Rosevear (Biochemistry, B353) became our new Hon. Secretary.

February 2nd saw the exhibition of children's projects in the V.C. Gallery, in which local history and demography figured prominently. This event was a phenomenal success, for which credit must go to Miss Phillip, who initiated the project; to Mr. Pickering (Garston Lane School) who did much of the organizing; and to the teachers, children and parents involved. The importance of this event cannot be underestimated. At a time of severe restrictions in local government spending, such local enthusiasm favourably impresses the funding bodies and thus benefits the whole community.

The Friends and the Museum Committee are also producing booklets of local historical interest. Those at present available are:

1. "Memoirs of Sarah Jane Harris of Manor Farm, Catmore" (edited by Miss Phillip). Price 25p. All proceeds to Wantage Parish Church Appeal.
2. "Memoirs of the Wantage Tramway Co. Ltd.", by Mr. L. Belcher, who worked for the company 1916-1945. Price 10p.
3. "Memoirs of a Railwayman" by Mr. W. Binding, who worked at Wantage Road Station from 1919. Price 10p.

What of the future? The Friends are keeping a close watch on planning applications in the Wantage area, and will raise objections where necessary. Wantage is in real danger: its whole character can be lost in a very short time if local organisations are not vigilant. Progress should not be halted, but unnecessary destruction

of Wantage's heritage must be prevented. When historic buildings have to come down we must ensure that we record them adequately first.

The Museum itself will soon be moving to a home in the new Civic Hall. Looking further ahead, we hope that plans for a museum on the site of the surgery in Church St. will come to fruition. This is intended to be a lively educational, cultural and social centre for the area. However, as mentioned, local enthusiasts must organise themselves to make their presence felt in the right quarters.

The programme of the Friends for the remainder of 1974 will be at least as stimulating as that to date. The next meeting is at St. Andrew's School on Friday 15 March at 8 p.m., when Mrs. Green (who worked with Arthur Negus) will speak on antiques.

In conclusion, I would urge all those with an interest in Wantage's past, present or future to join the Friends. Alan Rosevear or I (both on Ext. 4893) will be pleased to give further information, collect the modest 25p subscription, and sell our publications.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

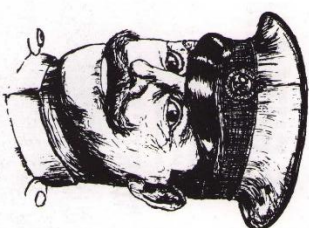
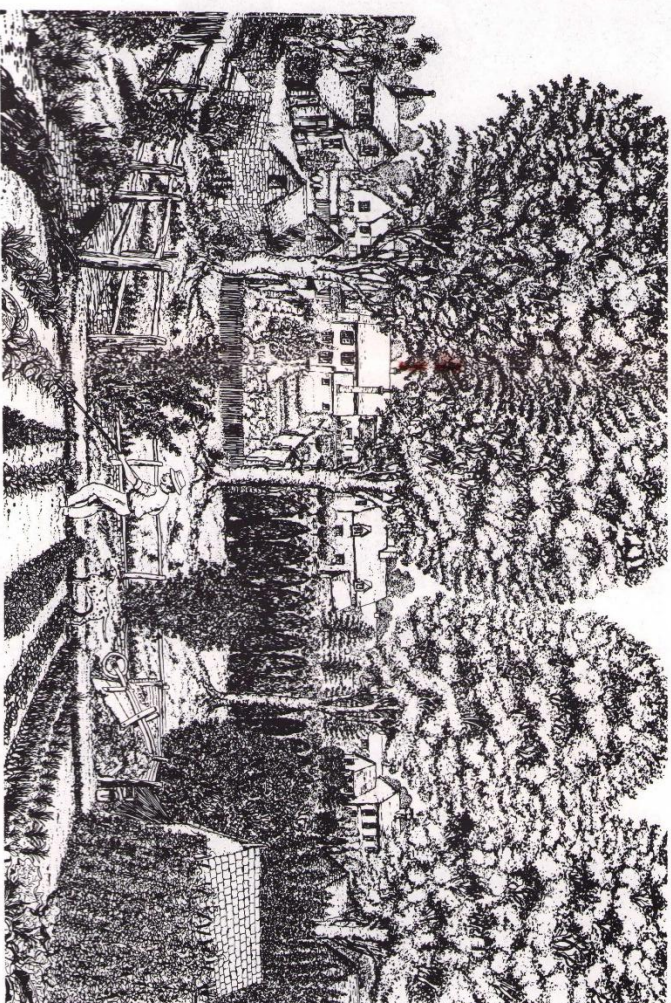
The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society was formed in November 1973. If you live in Wallingford or the surrounding villages and would like to know more about the Society, ring George Henwood on Ext 2766 or Tom Valentine on Ext 4309.

Mr. Cogan's honest criticism of my work in the January issue came just in time: I had recently been brought to my knees by the blatantly dishonest criticism of the defence correspondent (for some such) of the Daily Express no less, who advised me "not to use five words when one would do".

Unlike the range of colours available to the artist, where the slightest dash of one can completely change the mood of another, words are finite and immutable, and need to be endlessly turned, qualified

and mixed again in order to achieve precisely the right shade of meaning.

Our own language is very limited. If there was one word, preferably onomatopoeic, for the noise which accompanies that all-obliterating foot as it descends to start the Monty Python show, then I would not need to use five less eloquent words in giving my opinion of defence correspondents, Desmond Hackett and Beaverbrook Newspapers. John Osborne had the same trouble. That's a comforting thought.



Vic Hitchman was a founder member of the AERE Art Society, but since its demise his sketches, painting and woodcarving are done by his own fireside. We hope we shall continue to see his work, like that on the left, (a self-portrait?) in future AERE art exhibitions.

The photograph below shows Vic escorting his daughter to Harwell Church for her marriage to Ian Battershill of AERE, which provided a further example of how the once divergent interests of the old and new communities of Harwell have become linked.

EVERYMAN'S FRIEND

In a small ceremony at the AERE Police Club on 8th February, the Authority Constabulary said a formal thank-you and farewell to Aubrey Victor Hitchman. Long and loyal service is properly appreciated by men in uniform, and this type of occasion is usually well-attended; but "Vic", being such good box-office, attracted a full house.

Two spells in Palestine (in whose friendly climate the seeds of that moustache were sown), three times in Egypt, two years in the Indian Army, and a stop-off in war-torn Italy made up Vic's service itinerary, and the experience was not wasted. While his fellows saw the world through the bottom of NAAFI beer mugs, Vic gleaned from every situation the last detail that his inquiring mind could discover, and his basic country wisdom is tempered now with the vast storehouse of his knowledge of the wicked ways of the world.

Vic tells some jaw-dropping tales, and although the laughter lines at his eyes will often twitch in the telling, the stories are all very serious, full of background facts, and true.

"I'm not clever enough to tell lies," says he.

When Vic returned to Harwell in 1944,

the most dramatic change he noticed in the local scenery was the daughter of the steward in 'A' Mess, whose name was Peg, and he quickly "came at courtin'." They got along very well together, and after twenty-eight years of marriage they still do. They have a daughter Susan who, along with her husband, was one of the first pupils at the AERE nursery school.

Vic is only fifty-nine. It was osteoarthritis in the hip which brought this particular phase of his career to an end. He had an operation in June last year, in which the defective piece of bone was "sawn" out, and a metal replacement "hammered" into position.

His description of the operation is only bettered by his description of the surgeon's face when asked if he'd given the bone to his dog. This worthy, overburdened no doubt with the gravity of his calling, had been very annoyed.

"It would have done no harm to give it

to his dog," Vic insists, "I'd finished with it!"

The flamboyant moustache and his unexpected artistic gifts tend to set Vic apart from his fellows. He hangs his work regularly in the Art Group exhibitions, but his painting is really an expression of a fascination with the natural world.

Knowing his love of the soil and the things which grow in it, it is not difficult even now to picture him following a horse across Harwell Field with his silver hair flying and the sod folding back from his plough. No doubt he would be singing, in rich round accents, a song of old Berkshire, and there would be laughter in his eyes.

For information on the boundary lines of the three parishes in which the "Atomic" sits, or to be shown the "Jack of Dover" and "Wild succory" which John Massfield mentions in his poem about Harwell, ask Vic Hitchman. It's much more fun than rooting around in

the library, and along with the indirect answer one may also find out why Jerusalem should remain Jewish, the scientific name of Globe Artichoke and a painless way of taking rum.

Good wishes for the future were heard on all sides at the presentation, and happily Vic is leaning less and less heavily on his "male bamboo" stick (female bamboo, apparently, is hollow-ended). What Vic would wish himself is just enough freedom in the hip to allow him to continue with the allotment, where every year he must meet his only known enemy—the dreaded horseradish—in hand-to-hand combat, and where every day he can see something of quiet interest.

I asked Vic who his particular friends were.

"Oh, the lads on my section," he said, meaning the police "shift" led by Bill Harvey.

"but everybody's my friend!"



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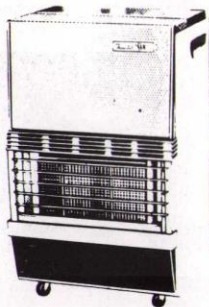
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1. Heather took a baking tray from the oven, forgetting that she had asked Clive to turn the cooker on. Though she very promptly dropped the tray the damage was done and she had a handful of rather nasty burns. Did Clive:
 - ☐ (a) Smear her hand with butter?
 - ☐ (b) Plunge it into a bowl of cold water?
 - ☐ (c) Apply ointment and bandage firmly?
2. Sarah came running in from the garden, screaming and holding her ear. She had an insect in it. What did Sarah's mummy do?
 - ☐ (a) Rush her to the casualty department of the nearest hospital?
 - ☐ (b) Poke it out with a hairclip?
 - ☐ (c) Float it out with tepid water?
3. Nancy decided to "go blonde" and was dabbing her hair with bleach, when some splashed into her eye. Should she:
 - ☐ (a) Wash it out with plenty of water?
 - ☐ (b) Cover her eye with a pad and shield from light?
 - ☐ (c) Apply eye drops?
4. Arthur was coming downstairs when a loose stair-rod caused him to slip and tumble down the rest of the stairs. He arrived at the bottom badly shaken and in a state of shock. Did Martha:
 - ☐ (a) Wrap him in blankets and give him hot water bottles?
 - ☐ (b) Keep him quiet and comfortably warm?
 - ☐ (c) Give him brandy?
5. Grandad bought Stephen a carpentry set for Christmas, but did not expect him to try the chisel blade out on his hand. What did he do when Stephen came in from the shed with blood gushing from a deep cut?
 - ☐ (a) Apply a tourniquet?
 - ☐ (b) Put hand under a running tap?
 - ☐ (c) Apply direct pressure on the cut?

6. Graham, a big built man, was dragged from the river and was found to have stopped breathing. Susan, an eleven year old St. John cadet who had recently learnt emergency resuscitation, could not cover his mouth with hers. Did she:
 - ☐ (a) Wait for the doctor to arrive?
 - ☐ (b) Do mouth to nose instead?
 - ☐ (c) Blow through a paper tissue?
7. A crack rang out across the football field one Saturday afternoon and a player went down, complaining of pain in his lower leg. What would you have done?
 - ☐ (a) Lifted him up and walked him off the field so that the game could continue?
 - ☐ (b) Stood helplessly while someone else dragged him to the edge of the field?
 - ☐ (c) Supported his leg carefully whilst instructing others to help get him onto a stretcher, before having him carried off?
8. Helen, aged three, poked no less than five haricot beans up her nose. Her mother was able to remove two of them very easily but the rest were hard to see. Did she:
 - ☐ (a) Try prying them out with a hairclip?
 - ☐ (b) Tell Helen to blow her nose hard?
 - ☐ (c) Take her to the doctor (or casualty department)?
9. Old Mrs. Frost, who lived alone, was found in her unheated bungalow, suffering from the effects of the extreme cold (hypothermia) and nearing collapse. Would you:
 - ☐ (a) Get her into a very hot bath?
 - ☐ (b) Place her between blankets to recover her body temperature gradually, and give her warm sweet drinks?
 - ☐ (c) Use hot water bottles or electric blankets to warm her up quickly?
10. Simon saw mummy's "sweets" (sleeping tablets) on the table and ate them all. When found he was very drowsy. Was he:
 - ☐ (a) Put to bed to sleep it off?
 - ☐ (b) Given salty water to make him sick?
 - ☐ (c) Scolded and left to play?

Answers: page 12

If you score 8 or over, you should join us, we need someone like you.

5—8: Lessons in First Aid are definitely indicated.

Under 5: Oh dear! words fail us— But there is still hope for you.

Enquiries to St. John's Ambulance:
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The Things They Write

"I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame
That do renown this city." Twelfth Night.

Among the many attractions for those on holiday or for visitors from abroad are our Cathedrals and ancient city and village Churches, which have so much association with the history of our country. These rank high on the list of interesting buildings to see. So often, however, time only permits a brief look around, with the result that many intriguing details are missed.

Almost every church has its own local legend, some unusual inscription on a tomb, an antiquity, and these are the items which are of particular interest to visitors.

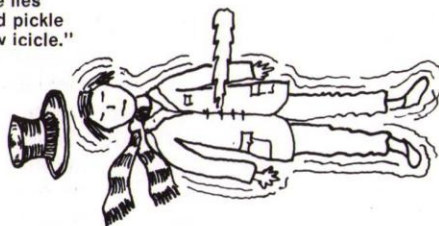
Many of these epitaphs reveal quaint humour, cynicism or jealousy, and others record for posterity the tale of some grim murder or tragedy which took place centuries ago. Here are a few examples.

In the Abbey grounds at Malmesbury, an inscribed gravestone dated 1703 records the sad story of Hannah Twynnoy, killed by a tiger:

"In the bloom of life, She's snatch'd from hence
She had not room to make defence.
For Tyger fierce took Life away
And here she lies in a bed of clay
Until the Resurrection Day."

From Bampton, in Devon, comes the sad tale of the Clerk's son, who died in 1776, and the mason who carved the stone was obviously determined to have his little joke:

"Bless my i i i i i
Here he lies
In a sad pickle
Kill'd by icicle."



Many readers will be familiar with the inscription on the tombstone in the precincts of Winchester Cathedral, which tells of the untimely death of a Grenadier in 1764:

"Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death by drinking cold Small Beer.
Soldiers be wise from his untimely fall
And when yere hot drink Strong or not at all."

Although these words were inscribed more than two centuries ago, they could be used as an unsolicited testimonial for a famous Romsey firm of Brewers!

Another warning on the dangers of drinking certain liquids comes from the famous Gloucestershire Spa:

"Here lie I and my two daughters,
Died from drinking Cheltenham's waters.
If we'd but stuck to Epsom salts,
We'd not be lying in these vaults."

Two world wars have removed many social barriers, but centuries ago, class distinction was very much in evidence. The poorer classes often had a sly gibe at the gentry or the so-called rich, as witness the following inscriptions. From Chard, we have:

"The world is full of crooked streets
Death is the market where all men meets
If life was merchandize as men could buy
The rich would always live
None but the poor would die."

At St. Edmund's Church in Kingsbridge, Devon, these lines appear on the outside of the south wall of the Church:

"To the memory of one named BONE PHILLIPS
who departed this life 1793."



Salisbury
Cathedral

"Here lie I at the Chancel door,
Here lie I because I am poor.
The further in the more you pay,
Here lie I as warm as they."

From a Wiltshire Church comes this tribute to a stage coach driver by the name of Richman Rogers who died in 1806 at the age of 38 years:

"While passengers of ev'ry age
With care I drove from stage to stage.
Death's sable hearse pass'd by unseen,
And stopp'd the course of my machine."

A friend of mine has a grandfather clock about 170 years old, which was made by her great great grandfather, Thomas Osmond, a well known Wiltshire clock and watchmaker. He lived from 1753 to 1833, and in the churchyard at Tisbury is a carved headstone with a clock face containing very appropriately round the edge of the dial the words "My time is in Thy Hand."

This headstone lies within the shadow of a huge yew tree, over 30 feet in circumference and reputed to be over 1,000 years old.

I cannot vouch for the authenticity of the following amusing verse from Cheshire, but the moral is obvious:

"Beneath this stone, a lump of clay,
Lies Uncle Peter Daniels,
Who early in the month of May
Cast off his winter flannels."

Not many men have fashioned their own memorial, but this rare distinction is perpetuated to the memory of Humphrey Beckham, who died in 1671, by a beautiful wood carving in St. Thomas' Church, Salisbury. The simple inscription reads:

"His own worke."

He was warden and chamberlain of the Salisbury Joiners' Guild from 1621-35 and some of his carved work is still to be found in a few of the old houses in the City.

Sir Christopher Wren, who was a Wiltshireman, was born at East Knoyle Rectory in 1632, and later this son of a country Parson was to become the most illustrious architect of his day and age and whose beautiful work has been preserved for future generations to admire. He was consulted about the strengthening of the tower and spire of Salisbury Cathedral, and in the Cathedral library there is still a copy of his notes and calculations in very neat handwriting. He will, of course, be remembered for his re-building of the City churches after the Great Fire of London in 1666, but above all his masterpiece was the building of St. Paul's Cathedral. He was buried in the Crypt in 1723, and the inscription on his memorial reads:

"Si monumentum requiris, circumspecte."
If you seek his monument, look around.

What greater epitaph could any man have?

THE NEEDS TEST (page 10)

Answers: 1 (b); 2 (c); 3 (a); 4 (b); 5 (c);
6 (b); 7 (c); 8 (c); 9 (b); 10 (b).

EXPLANATION

by Harwell's Senior Sister D.E. Warren

- 1(b) The reduction of heat is essential to prevent further burning. Plunging the hand into cold water will lessen the spread of heat in the tissues and relieve the pain. The hand should be kept in the water for at least 10 minutes.
1(a) and (c) are wrong because butter, ointments, etc. retain heat and so aggravate a burn.
- 2(c) The insect will float out quite easily if the ear is gently flooded with tepid water.
2(a) and (b) are wrong because:
2(a)—any unnecessary delay will further distress the child,
2(b)—poking an ear may damage the canal or perforate the ear drum.
- 3(a) It is essential that the bleach is diluted and washed out of the eye *immediately*, otherwise the chemical will burn the eye. The head should be held under gently running water, or plunged into a basin of water, and the eye blinked repeatedly for 10–20 minutes, or until the stinging stops.

- 3(b)—the bleach would be retained and burn the eye tissue,
3(c)—drops will not wash out the irritant, and may react adversely with it.
- 4(b) Reassurance also helps.
4(a) and (c) are wrong because:
4(a)—overheating the body will draw blood to the skin and deplete the deeper vital organs,
4(c)—there may be internal injuries, or an anaesthetic may be needed to set any fractures. Lips may be moistened with water until shock is passing and further injuries excluded.
- 5(c) The bleeding must be stopped immediately—direct pressure is the most effective method provided there is no embedded foreign body in the wound. If you do not have a dressing, use finger pressure, preferably with some clean material.
5(a) and (b) are wrong because:
5(a)—a tourniquet is dangerous for several reasons, e.g. it may be put on and forgotten, so causing permanent damage to the limb,
5(b)—this would encourage bleeding from a deep cut.
- 6(b) This method is as effective as mouth-to-mouth, and more easily managed in this instance.
6(a) and (c) are wrong because:
6(a)—the most important need is to get oxygen into the blood stream by inflating the lungs: speed is essential, and the victim could die while waiting for the doctor,
6(c)—a paper tissue would not seal the escape of air between rescuer and victim.
- 7(c) A suspected fracture should be subjected to a minimum of movement, to prevent further damage.
7(a) and (b) are wrong because:
7(a)—if weight is placed on the injured limb, apart from increasing pain, the ends of the bone may be displaced and damage blood vessels or nerves or puncture the skin,
7(b)—pretty useless all round!
- 8(c) A doctor will have special forceps for removing nasal objects, and meanwhile the child should be encouraged to breathe through her mouth.
8(a) and (b) are wrong because:
8(a)—a hairclip is likely to push the bean further out of reach,
8(b)—this may embed the bean in soft tissues.
Both (a) and (b) may damage the nasal passages.
- 9(b) Further heat loss must be prevented, but the body temperature must recover gradually.
9(a) and (c) are wrong because by either of these methods the superficial blood vessels will dilate very suddenly and take blood away from the deeper vital organs, and may cause a fatal collapse.
Old people living alone in poorly heated homes on inadequate diets are particularly prone to this condition.
- 10(b) Drugs of this nature should be diluted and eliminated as quickly as possible by making the child sick.
10(a) and (c) are wrong because the child might go into a very deep sleep, progressing to coma.
All medicines and tablets should be out of the reach of children and should be in a lockable cabinet.



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SO MANY CARPETS
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Chieveley 569 & 595

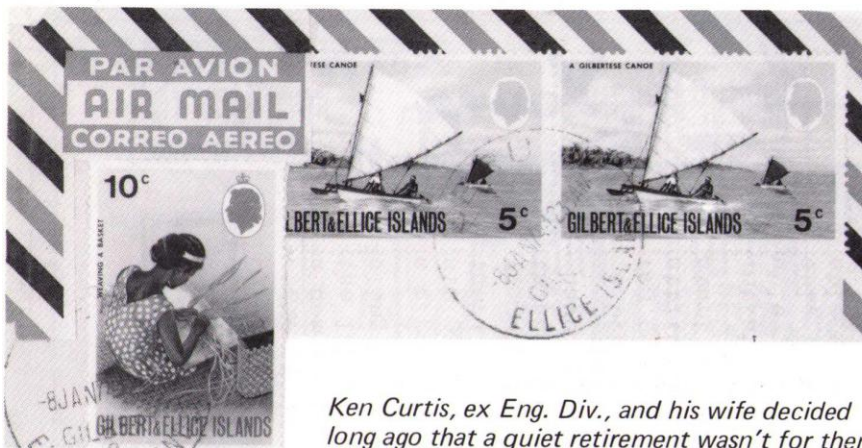
We are 200 yards Newbury side of
the Chieveley Flyover on the A34

OUR ESTIMATES
WILL BEAT ALL OTHERS



Cartoon
by courtesy
of
"Weekly News"

"It doesn't say anything about people who forget to post winning coupons!"



Ken Curtis, ex Eng. Div., and his wife decided long ago that a quiet retirement wasn't for them.

During the heartwarming send-off that colleagues gave me before I left Harwell, Mr. Byrne remarked that he wondered if BERU was a place or the initial letters for British Experimental Reactor Utility. Now that I am actually here I can assure you that the nearest thing we have to a reactor is the earth oven in which the larger things are cooked, like pig and tuna fish.

Beru is a small island in the Gilberts, about 8 miles long, and less than ½ mile wide in the middle but up to 1 mile at the ends. Nowhere is the island more than 8 feet high. The lagoon is sheltered from the prevailing wind by the island with its tall coconut palms, and is therefore usually calm. From the ocean beach there comes a continual roar; when the wind freshens this is added to by the rattle of the coconut fronds.

On this ocean beach mighty waves break white over the coral head a ¼ mile out, and come rolling in across the reef. The beach is approached through high palm trees bending to the wind and salt bush, between which one catches glimpses of the clean, golden sand and the indescribable blue of the ocean and sky.

All the views to landward are interrupted by coconut palms which grow up to forty feet high. Between them here and there are pandanus with their curious roots like legs, and shaggy heads; these will grow up to twenty feet. The breadfruit is also to be seen, an attractive tree with leaves like the fig. There is not much undergrowth except the young trees.

There are few flowering shrubs, and small flowers only come after the rains. We have a fine frangipani outside the back door. These beautiful wax-like flowers, white with an orange centre, are used for head garlands and have a heady perfume.

The buildings of the Hiram Bingham High School, or Rongorongo to give it

its local name, are well spaced with wide roadways running at right angles across the site. They were laid down of lagoon mud set hard at the beginning of the century, when this was the head station of the missionary society that sent me here. The printing works and Teacher Training were moved to Tarawa some 25 years ago; in the meantime the school has progressed, and over the last 5 years or so has been brought up to a high standard for the colony.

It has a good reputation for turning out well-equipped citizens. Old students of the school are very proud of the fact, and wherever we have been there has been a genuine interest in our work for the school. We have just heard that all the 3rd year scholars have been accepted for 4th and 5th year education at Tarawa. Also the Rongorongo Scout Troup has won the colony shield for Scoutcraft.

It is a boarding school, the parents paying for the child's keep. The children come from many islands, and as shipping is one of the imponderables one's attitude has to be geared to accept things as they come. This year will start in January without Form One who cannot get here in time.

The timetable has just been produced and I have:
3 double periods of Technical Drawing
3 treble periods of Woodwork
1 treble period of Art.

The scholars rise at 6 a.m. and school starts at 8 a.m. Duty teachers on rotation rouse the scholars at 6 a.m. and enforce lights out at 9.15 p.m. and supervise duties, washing and feeding in between.

Everyone lives in the school grounds; there are three U.N. Volunteers from Britain. The acting Head is a Gilbertese and there are three other Gilbertese teachers. All the other helpers are Gilbertese. It is a very happy community and

although we each retain our own very different customs it is a pleasure to work in such harmony.

Beru is famous for its craft in baskets, mats and hats; other specialities are eel and fish traps and shark-tooth swords. If one is interested, one can obtain a so-called grass skirt or a man's body mat for dancing. All the rush work is made from the pandanus frond, the stiffeners from coconut palm ribs.

The social centre of each village is the Maneaba, a usually large, thatched building with low eaves open all round. The centre is always kept clear except for performers. The headmen sit around with their families behind. We have been given welcome feasts by several different villages. There is a tradition for this which is rather formal. First the guest receives a welcome, and speeches are made all round. After the meal the guest gives his pedigree or antecedents; then there may be questions. The host may then thank the guest for his presence after which the guest will express his thanks for the meal dwelling on the quality and quantity.

Guests can only leave after a consensus has been reached by the old men and permission given. Yet for all the formality there is a genuine warmth. At one village one man on behalf of the village presented us with baskets to signify their friendship.

At our welcome at the school before the holiday the children presented traditional dances performed to singing or chanting. In the first dance parties moved in from either side, danced up to the guests and garlanded their heads with circlets beautifully made from flowers. Some dances depict island life such as fishing or sailing a canoe. The excitement mounts as the dancing proceeds. On this occasion they finished with dancing called Batere in which a hollow box is drummed and the crescendo builds up to a tremendous climax.

By December the winds should have shifted round to the West and brought the rain that is to fill our tanks and keep us supplied until next year. So far there has only been one real rain storm. So if Chem. Eng. have a spare Desalinization Plant to spare send it along. On second thoughts it probably wouldn't reach here until next year and the 1975 Westerlies, so it's not worth bothering.

Best wishes to all at Harwell.

P.S. The heat slows you down here; one's output is reduced as though working in a pressure suit.

THEATRE IN THE DOLDRUMS

At one point in last month's opening production by the new company at the Oxford Playhouse, the totally unsympathetic anti-hero comes to the footlights and fires five blank cartridges at the audience. This was typical of a production in which plot, characters and dialogue were all equally painful to the ears, and in which the only pleasure was derived from the music between scenes as safety-helmeted men in boiler suits came on to move the interchanging scenery.

At Oxford's 'New' Theatre during the same week there was "Rupert Bear" after many months of pop and panto and before four weeks of rock musical due to follow.

It was a consolation, therefore, during this same week, to find an amateur cast transcending these professional offerings. Travelling from Abingdon, their theatre is as speedily reached as the Oxford ones, but the patron parks freely and free outside it, and finds a seat at one fifth the price, a comfortable seat on which a programme, not at 10p but free, awaits him. The theatre? AERE Social Club! The company? AERE Dramatic Society!

"Juno and the Paycock" by Sean O'Casey was a well-chosen play that even for the writer, who had seen it on the professional stage, proved fresh and interesting, with convincing character portraits by the leads Mary Frere and Rod Paddock and the 13 supporting cast.

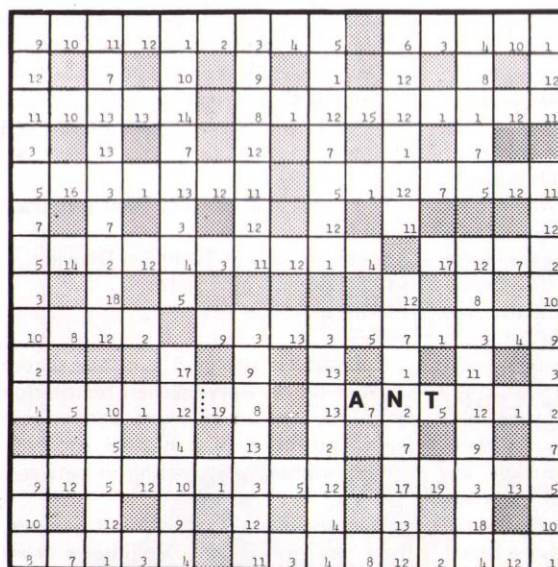
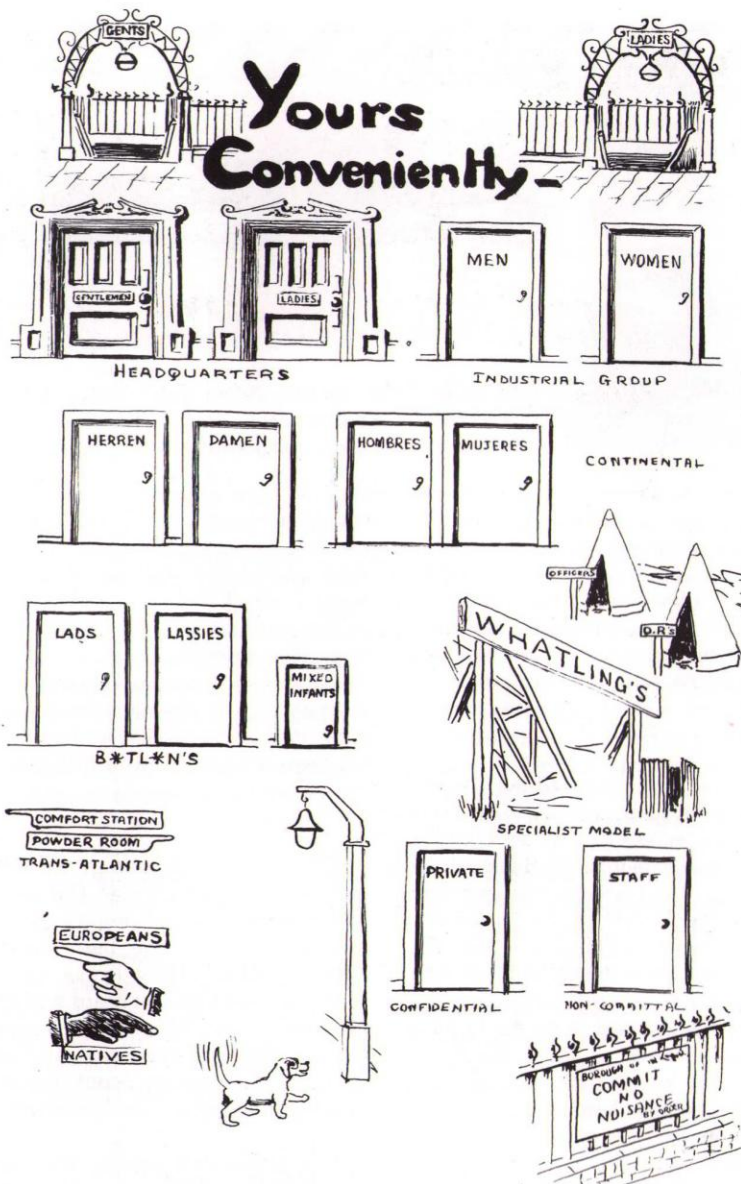
My only unfavourable criticism shall be reserved for a minority of the audience. It is a welcome concession to be able to bring one's drink back from the bar, a thing not allowed in other theatres. To bring back also potato crisps in their cellophane packs is to be unfair to the cast and to the audience who want to hear them! The AERE Dramatic Society deserves better support.

CODEWORDS

THIS crossword puzzle has only one clue — the word that is already printed in it. Notice the number alongside each letter of the clue word. Where this number re-appears elsewhere in the puzzle, the letter is also repeated. Fill in these known letters first then work out remainder. Dotted lines indicate hyphens or linked words, where these occur.

SOLUTION TO LAST PROBLEM

1 P; 2 R; 3 A; 4 N; 5 T; 6 O; 7 I; 8 C;
9 U; 10 F; 11 E; 12 S; 13 G; 14 D; 15 B;
16 X; 17 Y; 18 Q; 19 L; 20 W; 21 K;
22 V; 23 H; 24 M.



Now test your skill: Experts, 12 to 15 minutes; goodish, 20 minutes; average, 30 minutes. SOLUTION NEXT MONTH.

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THE

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BY

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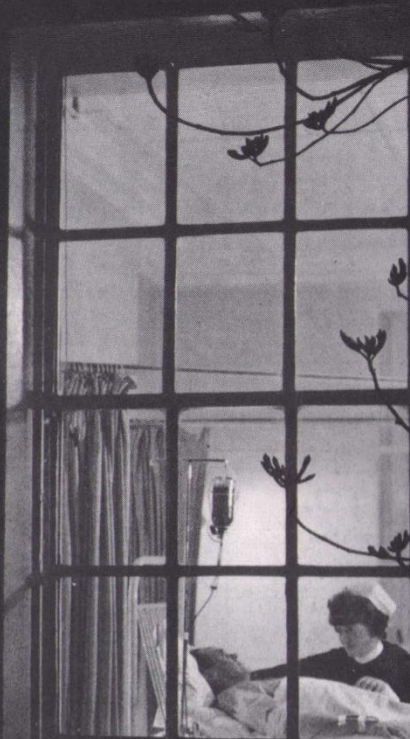
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