



GILWERN U3A NEWSLETTER

“UNSOCIAL TIMES”

Issue 4 on 15 May 2020

Dear Members

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Unsocial Times*. We hope you enjoy it. Keep well and safe.

Hilary Lipscombe

Chair, Gilwern U3A

Dig No Dig

Susie A

For all those of you fed up with lying out in the garden, reading, drinking and generally relaxing, but with a niggling feeling you really ought to grow a bit of your own delicious food, then prick up your ears and pick up some cardboard and some compost.

Choose a bit of lawn or a scruffy patch in the garden in the sun, open up the cardboard boxes, remove staples and tape and spread on the ground, making sure they overlap and no light can get down to the ground beneath, to the size of bed you require. To stop weed creep have the cardboard extend beyond the proposed bed area, and if you have a handy partner get them to make an open wooden rectangle to enclose your little patch of heaven as it will look tidier and stop the birds scratching the earth, but but it will work without sides.

I wet the cardboard and then cover the bed area with compost to a depth of 5 to 6 inches, walk on it to firm it down, sow your seeds straight in to this, or plant stuff you prepared earlier in plugs which tends to be more successful and is instant! Suitable for beetroot, spring onions, peas, salad, carrots, herbs etc. Sit back with a juicy gin and tonic and admire your handiwork!!

Reference: Charles Dowding, lots of videos on Youtube and his website, he was also inspired as I was by Ruth Stout.



Before



After

Two photos:

and

Here's a local quiz for you

Hilary L

Today's quiz is set by y Gaer Museum, Art Gallery and Library. Y Gaer is a new cultural venue in Brecon, bringing together Brecknock Museum and Brecon Library as a community resource for the people of Brecon, Wales and the world. This is only for those with access to the Internet. The next issue will give the picture for those who have no Internet. [What sight made this woman faint? Take the great British art quiz.](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/apr/22/great-british-art-quiz-y-gaer-museum-art-gallery-and-library-brecon-wales)

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/apr/22/great-british-art-quiz-y-gaer-museum-art-gallery-and-library-brecon-wales>

Quarantine Through Art

Lynda O'K

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYpQzUvWT94&feature=youtu.be>

Kettner's Book of the Table 1877, p. 486

WELSH RABBIT.—Let the Welsh tell their own tale in the words of Lady Llanover: — “Welsh toasted cheese and the melted cheese of England are as different in the mode of preparation as is the cheese itself; the one being only adapted to strong digestions, and the other being so easily digested that the Hermit frequently gave it to his invalid patients when they were recovering from illness. Cut a slice of the real Welsh cheese, made of sheep and cow's milk; toast it at the fire on both sides, but not so much as to drop; toast a piece of bread less than a quarter of an inch thick, to be quite crisp, and spread it very thinly with fresh cold butter on one side (it must not be saturated with butter); then lay the toasted cheese upon the bread, and serve immediately on a very hot plate. The butter on the toast can of course be omitted if not liked, and it is more frequently eaten without butter.”

In case the wandering Englishman should suddenly feel in his travels a sort of home-sickness, and desire to partake of Welsh rabbit, let it be known that in Viard's cookery book, which has a great reputation, the receipt is quite correctly given; and that on this authority the said Englishman may safely call either for Wouelche Rabette, or for Lapin Gallois. Be more wholesome than another; but that there is any marked difference in digestibility between cheese toasted and cheese melted or stewed, it is difficult to believe.

Another Dingbat

Nicky C

Some common phrases. Can you work them out? Answers will be in *Unsocial Times* No 5

Dingbats

Nicky C

Answers to common phrase Dingbat (*Unsocial Times* Issue No 3)

- A dime a dozen
- The right weather? I think, can't find where I wrote the answers
- Second wind
- Through thick and thin
- See eye to eye
- To beat a dead horse
- The devil's in the details
- A piece of cake
- Every cloud has a silver lining
- A perfect storm

Answer to Puzzle in Issue 3

Dave H

On page 1 of the last issue of *Unsocial Times*, the only way I can think of involves a stepladder. The Fab Four can then form a tetrahedron of side 2 metres with one Beatle up the stepladder. Nothing in the problem says you can't use props!

Give to Foodbank

Rhiannon W

Roadhouse Narrowboats has a notice inviting donations to Abergavenny Foodbank which is in need. They are leaving their lobby door unlocked between 9.00 and 5.00 to allow drop offs - no social contact involved. Some people who would normally donate at the supermarkets are having home deliveries so might welcome the opportunity to order a few things extra to leave at Roadhouse Narrowboats.

The *Unsocial Times* needs contributions

Editor

Do you have anything we can add to the coming issues of *Unsocial Times*? We seek short articles with a maximum of 200 words. Keep it short and sweet! As you see, we can cope with most illustrations. If you don't have Internet, but have a short piece, a photograph or a diagram, then please post it to: David Hall, 3 Hill View, Gilwern NP7 0BG.

Old and New.

Tony G

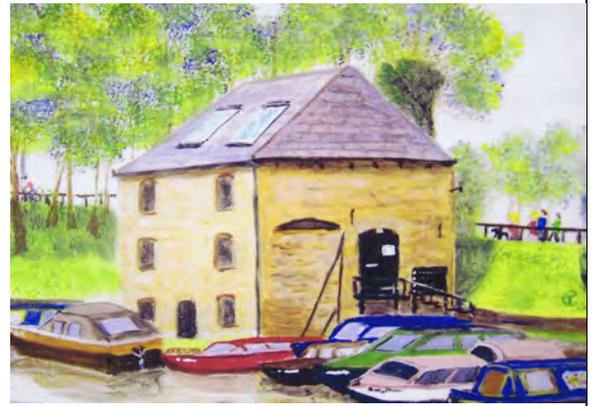
Baileys Wharf Govilon.

The current main building is a canal office circa 1925. The wharf had its own sidings and the signal box was in operation.

Old



New



Fresh pizza in Gilwern

Rhiannon W

The Towpath Inn has started doing weekend takeaways. Their notice board offers Beer, Welsh Cider & Wine together with "takeout". When I had a look online (end of April) seems to be fresh pizza kits at the moment.

Battered in Greece

Pat

I've just seen an article in the *Telegraph* about Greece minting a 2 euro coin to commemorate the Battle of Thermopylae 2,500 years ago. The battle against the Persians invaders, under King Xerxes, was bravely fought by only 301 Spartans. This reminded me that during my school and student days, I'd spent a lot of time with friends in Loughborough where there was a fish and chip shop called "The 300 Spartans". A quick "google" confirmed that it still exists. The mystery is "how did it get its name?" The only theory is, that like the fish, the 300 Spartans were battered in Grease!
(Apologies for the pun!)

V-E Day was observed on May 8, 1945, in Great Britain, Western Europe, the United States and Australia, and on May 9 in the Soviet Union and New Zealand. V-E Day commemorates the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany to the Allied forces in 1945, ending World War II in Europe. ([Wikipedia](#))

Not quite VE Day

Harriet H

My father, Bill McElwee, fighting with a Scottish regiment, ended up in northern Germany as the war came to an end, with some areas being sensible enough to capitulate before the final surrender was declared. My father wrote: 'It had been a strange experience to see British and German officers standing together discussing the terms of the truce' as is illustrated by this photograph. He is pictured, probably interpreting since he spoke fluent German, looking characteristically casual with his hand in his pocket and his tin hat slightly askew.

My own memories of VE Day are minimal, but I have a vague memory of people in strange, scary masks and ending up in tears. We lived with my grandmother who, once the Germans were beaten, began to feel sorry for them. I was indeed given a Union Jack, but according to my mother, my grandmother insisted that I say 'Hurrah for South Africa, Mafeking has been relieved' rather than anything about the ending of the present conflict.



VE Day

Irene P

My friend Ann and I, 10 years old, were playing in her grandmother's garden at 'Clydach House' when her Uncle (Dr Jack) came out to us and shouted 'the war is over, the war is over' and swung us around in turn. They had a flagpole in the garden and the Union Jack was hoisted.

VE Day

Kay B

A photo of me taken in Scotland holding a Union Jack flag on which I assumed was VE Day as my parents returned to Nuneaton in 1945. Dad was moved to Forfar from Coventry to a 'shadow factory' after being bombed out in 1940.



At *Unsocial Times* we seek your memories of VE Day. Please send to webmaster@gilwernu3a.org

A Modern Hairy Tale

Lynda O'K

In times of lock down, haircare is one of those areas where we have had to take responsibility. We are told to "embrace our roots" and "avoid the box colour", which, in fairness I have done. I now sport washed out colour and an inch of white root, but this is not my story.

Spare a thought for my other half. Hirsute he is not, think extremely wide parting, think Iain Duncan Smith. On day one of lockdown, the Trump comb over was bandied as a possibility, but instead we invested in a Panasonic ER GB60 (other beard and hair trimmers are available).

On day twenty eight, we set up in the garden. I have to point out two things here, firstly, I've never cut a lock of hair in my life, and secondly, my husband is a Warfarin taker, so the slightest nick would result in an inevitable bloodbath.

With hair trimmer set on A1, I made the first sweep from nape to crown. A good result, a neat pathway through the hair, and there was no blood. When I'd finished, a quick look in the mirror resulted in a request for an even shorter cut. Maybe the beard trimmer attachment would do the trick. The first sweep saw the remaining hair disappear leaving just a pink scalp. Too late now, the whole head had to be done. Now affectionately referred to as the "corona crop," forget Iain Duncan Smith, now think Telly Savalas, if only we had a lollipop, could we add it to our online shopping list?

Who loves ya baby?

Where will you go?

Kay B

It's that time of year when all of us are thinking about holidays, and when and where we can travel. Perhaps calculating as indicated in the list below may give you some ideas:-

INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose a destination between 1 and 9
- Multiply the number by 3
- Add 3
- Multiply by 3 again
- Add the two digit number you get together
- The number you get is where you will be travelling to. Take it to the right hand column: -

DESTINATION

- France
- Spain
- USA
- England
- Baltic Cruise
- Italy
- Australia
- The Caribbean
- Stay at home
- Thailand
- Morocco
- Portugal
- Greece
- India
- Mexico

That's a very unkind, but at present an inevitable answer!! *Editor*

Aerial photograph

Karen H

Each issue (up to the next five) will contain two aerial photographs for you to identify.

Where are they?

Answers on next page.



We've all been very good, isolating ourselves and trying not to go out anywhere. But one week in April blew the benefits of our self-isolation completely away – we had to visit both The Royal Gwent and St Woolos Hospitals – places we vowed we'd never, EVER, visit during the pandemic.

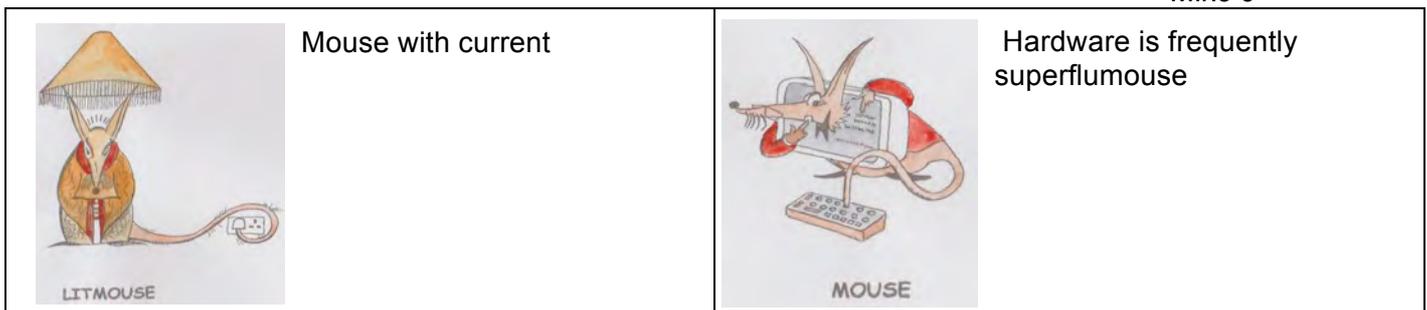
Armed with disposable gloves, scarves and medical wipes, we ventured into the portals of the Royal Gwent, to be greeted by hand sanitisers and staff wearing face masks. The visit to St Woolos was slightly more unnerving, as immediately on entering we were asked if we were COVID-19 suspects. When replying in the negative, we were ushered upstairs where staff in full scrubs were waiting for my husband.

Then it occurred to me: we were worried about visiting once, perhaps twice, but the staff there - the secretaries, the cleaners, the porters - they had to work there every day, with all the inherent risks. We take for granted the people manning our hospitals in these dreadful times, not only doctors and nurses, but everyone else who keeps our NHS running smoothly.

We are very fortunate to have them, so another week or two of staying at home will be worth it.

Gilwern U3A mice

Mike J



The Land of Song

-

Dean P

We live in unprecedented and challenging times indeed and being self employed at the time of the Covid-19 lockdown has come with its obstacles. Free time at home does, however, give you time to research and enjoy your favourite pastimes, which for me is Victorian Welsh history. So I've been able to sharpen my lecture "The Land of Song" which I was looking forward to giving you all this month – but alas, it was not to be!

It's a subject close to my heart having spent 30 years of my life as a chorister of a well known male voice choir. They were incredibly enjoyable years too, during which time I was the choir's soloist for 20 years and acted as compère for a further 15 years. Experiencing the atmosphere of standing ovations at a packed Sydney Opera House on two occasions during our month long tours of Australia and New Zealand. The visit to the White House (pre-Trump thankfully!) during our five tours of USA and Canada. The Royal Variety Show where I joined the royal line up to meet Her Majesty the Queen and the three St David's Day Concerts at the Hotel du Paris for Prince Albert II of Monaco.

Singing with Tom Jones, drinking champagne in Monte Carlo with Shirley Bassey and bizarrely enough proposing to Oscar winner Joan Fontaine. None of it would have happened without being a chorister.

I was inspired by how the entire tradition began, how those darkened south Wales mining valleys produced a golden era of choral singing that inspired a generation and galvanised communities. I look forward to sharing that with you in Gilwern U3A – one day soon hopefully! Take care and keep safe.

Art Challenge

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Lynda O'K

The "lock down, open up" art challenge is open to all Gilwern U3A members regardless of artistic ability. For details and guidance and help (with ideas), please see the News page of the web site and attachments therein.

The May Competition subject is:

The closing date for entries is **25 May**.

WILDLIFE

Keep those brushes moving, and good luck!

What's the time?

<https://youtube/rkGIET1o9m4>

-

Dave H

Answer to aerial photos: previous page: L'Arc de Triomphe and Niagara Falls

Moving on from the astronomical calendar (Edition 3) the meteorological calendar splits the year into 4 seasons according to the annual temperature cycle. This 3 month grouping using the Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1780 and then adopted across many parts of the world due to European influence. The Northern Meteorological seasons begin on the 1st day of the months that include the equinoxes and solstices. In the UK, meteorological spring is a fixed period between 1st March and 31st May. The end of this period is the one we are using for our final submission date for the Photographic Challenge on 'Trees'. Have you sent yours in yet to gilu3a@gmail.com?

However it is not universal, with some countries adopting a 6 season calendar, India does have 4 seasons but none of them are Spring! Sweden and Finland use an entirely temperature based system so the beginning of Spring begins when the average temperature rises above 0 C and therefore can vary between and across each country.

In the UK we also used to follow an ecological calendar when Spring was defined 'as when the daily temperature reached 10 C over a defined sequence of days'. This almost always used to occur in March, but now that temperature is not uncommon in the winter so it is no longer relevant!

Kew Gardens

Phillie H

Take a brief virtual visit to Kew Gardens: <https://youtu.be/8IV-YANXP8g>

Winner of April Art Competition April



April Competition

The winner of the month of April art competition, April Shower, was Jim Blackwell, who painted this watery picture of *Bath Abbey in an April Shower*. The judge "loved its vibrancy and colour palette".

May Competition

The subject for the May competition is Wildlife, advertised in this Newsletter with helpful attachments on line.

Dunsborough Park Tulip Festival:
<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>

Food and shopping

Pat & Keith H

Waitrose daybreak pensioners' time is working well for us now. The butchers in Abergavenny had very little stock, as they had been swamped with orders, but we managed to get what we wanted. We really miss the market for the fruit and veg not being kept too cold and under ripe. The cheese, which we used to get from the market, isn't on the shelves in Waitrose and we know that the Brie is never as runny. We've been used to granary bread that is really nutty, unlike the supermarket version. I wonder if, after the disruption of the Town Hall alterations, this blow will drive the stall holders away for good. We rediscovered our old fondue set when spring cleaning and fried cubes of steak at the table with cheese sauce and chips. Unlike in the old days, we did supplement this with peas and spring greens to ensure our five-a-day! Old recipes are being revisited now that we've got more time to spend on cooking.

The first day of restrictions, I worked my way through the daily crosswords, sudokus, sujikos and codewords wishing there were more to do. The very next day three extra puzzle pages were printed. Good old Telegraph! Mind you to solve the big new daily crossword, you need to Google to make any progress. Who can remember who got the shotput silver medal in 1960 Olympics without "cheating"?

Keep a record

Gwent Archives are asking us all to keep a record in these extraordinary times. Details appear on our web site on the News page and also the Family Archive page.