

Wandsworth
Society
newsletter



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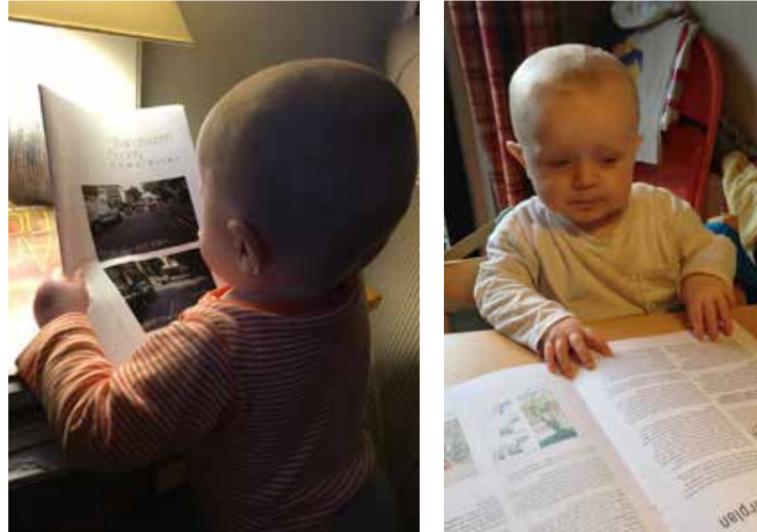
We wish you a Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year

The Bedside Edition 2020

Campaign to attract younger readers proves a great success

Only eleven months old, but although very advanced for his age (according to biased reports) he does need a little help with some of the longer words and more contentious and abstruse articles.

However, in an exclusive interview with our reporter young Ned (*would probably have*) said "Easily the most interesting and informative local amenity society newsletter I have ever seen"



Wandsworth Society

The Bedside 2020

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Greetings

We had thought there would be no Bedside this year. The usual bumper Bedside Edition relies on advertising income to help cover the printing costs. This year it seemed unfair to canvass our regular advertisers, many of whom we know must be struggling to make ends meet in what we have no embarrassment in calling these unprecedented times.

However, aware of the extent of the disappointment that the lack of a Bedside might cause (*Does anyone have a microscope? Ed*) a few days ago we toyed with the idea of getting one out.

After a little midnight oil had been burnt, this, the fruit of that toying emerged; very much a pot pourri, melange, motley collection, what have you, in which we hope you will find something to enjoy.

Many thanks to those who rallied round with reports, reminiscences, the odd suggestion, to say nothing of the odder suggestion ...

We wish you well, and hope you are able to enjoy your Christmas, whatever the size or number of your bubble(s), and that 2021 will be better ... hopefully much better, than 2020, and that we shall meet again.

Old faces

Went to a gig back in Croydon where I was at school a long time ago
Scanned all the craggy old faces for school mates I once used to know

I searched the bar in the interval
Watching each face quaffing its beer
all silver beards and leather jackets
no ex-grammar school dudes around here

I didn't recognise any old classmates
so, disappointed, I went for a pee
caught my face by surprise in the mirror
Blimey! Who'd recognise me.

bsjb

In the event there's a cracker shortage and you find yourself desparte for a groan ...

What does the Queen call her Christmas Broadcast?

The One Show!

What is the best Christmas present in the world?

A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars?

Their days are numbered!

What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"

Father Christmas walking backwards!

How will Christmas dinner be different after Brexit?

There will be no brussels!

How does Christmas Day end?

With the letter Y!

What do you call a bunch of chess players bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!
Boom, boom!

Singing Santas

Here's something you'd pay good money to have seen, seemingly acapella, and with a flightless bird ...



In the good old days, when I was trying to earn an honest shilling as a singer, Christmas was the most fruitful time of year. Freelancers like me waited anxiously on the side-lines for jobs to come along when the full-timers would be busy with their more lucrative solo jobs in Messiahs and Christmas Oratorios and looking for part-timers to fill in for them in the lesser roles – carol singing at office parties, in department stores and other similar jobs. These were our rewards for turning out on chilly mornings to deputise for the regular singers at their church jobs during the rest of the year.

One particular occasion stands out for its surreal quality on a variety levels. During that year I had done a lot of deputising (“depping”) at one of the London churches with a regular professional quartet. “It’s a “singing Santa” job in Slough”, said my benefactor. “And could you give Larry a lift down there?” Larry was the tenor – also a dep. He lived not far from me, so that was OK. “Julie and David – soprano and bass – are bringing the costumes.” I was told.

Larry and I set off in good time, having been given an address and rather scanty directions to the headquarters of a mobile phone company on the outskirts of Slough. On arrival we were met by the girl who was organising

the party, and who had booked us through an agency. She showed us to our changing room – a meeting room, giving us privacy by means of a sheet of paper pasted over the window in the door.

A few minutes later we were joined by a petite young lady unknown to us – certainly not our soprano. “Are you a singer?” we asked. “No, I’m a penguin.” She said. “There are usually two of us, but I think they ran out of money.” At least she had brought her own very lifelike costume.

Shortly after that our other two singers arrived, bringing a large bag containing our Santa costumes. These were OK, though we mutually agreed that wearing the beards was not on, being scratchy and somewhat muffling.

We were joined by our party organiser, but there was a last minute hitch. “You are going to sing “Swing low, sweet chariot, aren’t you?” She said. We told her that wasn’t on our carol list. “Oh, but we told the agency you would have to,” she said. “All our people are great rugby fans.” A hurried discussion revealed that Larry knew the words and we would improvise some hummed harmonising, and we were led into the room where the party was already in full swing.

Some kind of festive snow scene had been rigged up as a background, and we began our singing, quickly realising that none of the guests were listening as they were entranced by the penguin. She was doing her act with great aplomb, performing tricks with her flippers and beak, in a very lifelike way. Our chariot swung high and low, unappreciated.

After 20 minutes or so we were told we could have a break, and retired to our changing room, but no sooner had we got there when a fire alarm began to ring loudly. Our soprano decided she would go and find out if this was a genuine alarm, and hurried back telling us that we (including the penguin) must leave the building at once.

We were very grateful for our cosy Santa outfits as we were led down the busy main road by a staff caretaker, the penguin staying in character by pressing the road crossing buttons with her beak. Every time we tried to stop – being by now some way from the building – we were urged on by the caretaker until we reached steps going down to an underpass. At this, one of the partygoers

rebelled, saying that this was a well-known local danger-spot. We dug our heels in, while several fire engines raced up to the offices.

Eventually someone with a mobile phone announced that everything was OK and we could return. Once back at HQ we asked our organiser if we should continue with our carolling. “Oh no,” she said, “they’ve all gone to the pub.” She gave us a bottle of wine and some sandwiches, and our fees, and that was that.

What became of the penguin? – you ask. She was last seen descending the steps into the subway with the caretaker ...



Prue Raper

A possibly not so young chestnut from the 2007 Bedside

A few festive seasons ago we were given *Voltaire, Goldberg and Others: A Compendium of the Witty, the Profound and the Absurd* compiled by Milton Shulman. author, film and theatre critic, and a regular on Radio 4 back in the day. Here is one of those things he collected ...

Michael Howard, the Minister for Water and Planning, told this story at the annual lunch given by Euram, the headhunters, yesterday -

A new British ambassador to the US was asked by the Washington Post what he wanted for Christmas and the New Year. “In no way can I accept a gift from the Washington Post,” he insisted. A few hours later his secretary told him the paper was on the telephone again. “Well, I suppose a small box of crystallised fruits would be just about acceptable.” he said.

The next day he read in the Washington Post: ‘The Soviet ambassador wants further progress on general disarmament for Christmas and the New Year. The French ambassador wants peace in the Middle East. The British ambassador wants a small box of crystallised fruits.’

Ferns of the Huguenot Burial Ground

A piece by Roy Vickery from the 2008 Bedside : included in 2020 in anticipation of the opening of the burial ground next year. Roy worked as a botanist at the Natural History Museum, London for over 30 years, and gave several interesting talks, one on plants he had gathered on his walk to the meeting..

I'm sometimes asked if I have a favourite local site for plants. Different sites have different interesting species, and my 'favourite' site changes from month to month. In early summer it might be Wandsworth Common for its cowslips, in November it would probably be Tooting Bec Common for its chamomile. However, as a site for all year round interest, the Huguenot Burial Ground probably comes top.

The Cemetery has exceptionally healthy colonies of several species of ferns. None of these ferns is particularly rare, but it's unusual to find such thriving plants in an area which superficially appears to have nothing of botanical interest. Four species of ferns are present and, if my memory is correct, bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), was also present some years ago.

On the top of one of the chest tombs is a mature, and several young plants, of scaly male fern (*Dryopteris affinis*). This is a widespread and abundant fern in the British Isles. Species of *Dryopteris* were formerly used to kill tapeworms and to rid cattle and sheep of flukes.

The least healthy looking of the cemetery ferns is hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*). One mature plant grows on the side of a chest tomb, and several immature plants, presumably its descendants grow nearby. Most of the larger fronds on the mature plant are deformed; is this due to poor growing conditions, a natural deviation, or did this plant grow from the spore of a cultivated 'ornamental' form. In the mid-nineteenth century, when there was tremendous interest in growing ferns, some nurserymen advertised over 60 forms of hart's-tongue. Most of these would be considered grotesque monstrosities today.



Asplenium ruta-muraria

Several healthy colonies, with numerous young plants, of wall rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) occur on the damper sides of a couple of chest tombs. This species is not uncommon, even in London, but it's unusual to come across such fine plants and such healthy colonies.

Maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) occurs in similar situations, with healthy mature plants producing numerous spores and young plants. As its name herbalists thought maidenhair spleenwort was good for treating malfunctions of the spleen; in folk medicine there are widespread but vague records of maidenhair spleenwort being used to treat coughs.

The Huguenot Burial Ground is more than old graves surrounded by mown grass, it is also the home of some tough and plucky ferns.

Roy Vickery

Dead Friends ... from the archives

On 15 October the Wandsworth Society reappeared - on Zoom. We restarted our monthly programme of talks with what we thought would be a local based talk. And it was - but one with a difference.

Emma Anthony, the archivist of Wandsworth Libraries and Heritage Service, gave a talk entitled 'Dead Friends' about some of the very personal and human resources that are in the Service's care including letters and photo albums which have made her feel these long-forgotten people are indeed her friends. As she said, these items put 'human flesh on the bones of history' - and she quoted 'an historian should never forget he is studying people and that people are still a collection of individuals'.

For example, there is a picture of Ashburton House showing little girls in the garden about 1888; who were they? Research has led to knowing about some of the owners of the House (now demolished to make way for the Ashburton Estate). There are the photo album and diaries of Florence Turtle (born 1896) which show the minutiae of daily life from 1917 to 1981.

Emma showed an extract of a letter from Peter Churton, in December 1909, to a small girl living near Clapham Common - as he had done,



some 70 years before - with drawings including one of the Common, and anecdotes including a sad reminiscence of how three little girls had died on the icy pond. That letter took us back to c1840 at a stroke. It shows how such apparently trivial things can give an insight into past times.

There was another extract of a letter from William Jackson, a commercial traveller in paint, who travelled in the 1890s to Australia (one of his many letters included a carefully wrapped mosquito, still in the large archive!), New Zealand, and South

America, including Rio de Janeiro during a revolution.

Emma closed with the archive of Geoffrey Haines, husband of Olive Haines, a mayor of Wandsworth in c1956 - again giving the detail of their life and times and including recollections of life in the second world war and his experiences as an Air Raid Warden.

A really interesting talk!
Jenny Massey

Christmas on Bondi Beach 1958

by Libby Spurrier

I've always looked forward to the autumn – it's when I spring clean, paint the house, resolve to write a bestseller, lose weight, improve my fitness. My spirits lift as they rarely do in spring. From September I look forward to cosy evenings with a fire and the curtains drawn. So my first Christmas in Sydney Australia when I was twelve years old was very strange.

In 1958 my father became the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald (a Fairfax not a Murdoch paper) and my parents and four children set sail in the grand old liner *Orcades* with all our worldly possessions. It took just over three weeks to reach Sydney. It took far longer for me to acclimatise to living in a city where parrots shrieked from trees covered in bright red flowers, and kookaburras and cicadas shrilled all day long, and the Australian bush around the city felt alien and frightening to someone mainly brought up in the soft green landscape of Northamptonshire. By the time December arrived the country was usually in the grip of a heatwave and Bondi Beach near where we lived was heaving with surfers. It was a shock to find that by 7pm it was dark even though it was mid summer. Christmas Day in 1958 dawned very hot, and very humid, the sun sulking behind a solid grey sky. I can't remember going to church that day, but we must have done because we went every Sunday, to a high Anglican church in Woolloomooloo. After which we went to Bondi Beach as we always did on Sundays, with our rubber surf mats. Eating hot roast turkey with all the trimmings at lunchtime felt weird and it must have been hellish cooking in that heat, but I think my parents were determined to keep up their traditions. My father had a horror



that his children would pick up Aussie accents and used to give a threepence¹ prize to the one who had retained their English accent the most. I never ever won and came back to England with a ripe Aussie twang. The first time I ever said something was "beaut" he nearly fell off his chair. So I think turkey and flaming the Christmas pudding with brandy remained a tradition which was an important reminder of home. Although I didn't know it at the time, I was horribly homesick, and I think they were too... We returned home in the autumn of 1961 on the maiden voyage of that great P&O ship *Canberra*, and I remember feeling very relieved to see the cool greens and golds of the English landscape...

As Christmas approaches in 2020, after an appalling nine months, I am delighted to be planning roast turkey with all the trimmings (even if just for one) in the proper climate – I want snow and frosts and holly with berries and mulled wine and fires and candles and robins pottering round the garden. None of which would have been appropriate on a boiling hot summer day in the southern hemisphere.

¹ For younger readers (*Oh, how we laugh ...*) in 1958, back in Blighty, a threepence or thruppence was a twelve-sided nickel-brass coin of fond memory, but young Libby's threepence would have been the small round silver Australian version.



CONFESSIONS OF A COUNTER-TENOR

A SUGGESTION FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Confessions of a counter-tenor Music by Roderick Williams Lyrics by Ned Sherrin

Some say it's a gift,
I give Handel a lift,
And that I'll be the toast of the town,
Others say I'm a freak,
That it's breaking next week,
So don't worry, it's bound to go down.

If your voice has a falsetto, folk invent a grim libretto
That involves a sharp stiletto to explain your higher range.
Philistines and Literati think you've brought back the castrati,
Or that your innamorati must be at best rather strange.

Ev'ry one is intrigued and most are sympathetic; "Is it tiring and does it hurt?"
"Excuse me asking you fair and square, but is ev'rything all right down there?"
Ev'ryone is intrigued; some concern is more synthetic;
some are able to disconcert:
"How do you sound in your normal voice?" "Did you have the op. by your own choice?"

But I'm a cross singer, a regular feller,
Like Bowman and Deller,
I'm not a cross-dresser,
A bender of gender, I'd send back to sender!

So why do I do it and put you all through it,
Why not give my chest voice a whirl?
I would if I could, but my chest is no good,
And I'd much rather sing like a girl!

And no poetry corner would be incomplete without a little doggerel – this from the Membership Secretary's other / better / lesser half.



A recording of Confessions is available from the National Opera Studio

<https://www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk/feargal-mostyn-williams-and-erika-gundesen>

The sound guy

helping you hear what is being said

I was always very happy to be a backroom boy, starting after school as a cinema projectionist in my home town of Bradford, Yorkshire.

As vacancies occurred, I moved to other ABC cinemas including Dewsbury and Huddersfield working a shift system that usually meant being alone, running the show. Only one show in those days, unlike today where a venue might have many screens showing many different films.

Three years after joining, the amplifier engineer that travelled around all the cinema chain in my area told me of a holiday relief projectionist vacancy going at the BBC in London. An interview at BBC Leeds was arranged and I was in.

The job entailed setting up film screenings at the small preview theatres at Ealing Film Studios, showing the rushes (a print from the filmed negative which the editor would afterwards use to assemble the programme) of the previous day's filming to a quality controller. These would be documentaries or high blown dramas, but also running American TV shows to a lovely lady from what was called purchased programmes. Shows such as the Mission Impossible series, cop shows and a whole variety.

Positions came up in sound and a shift to working with tape recorders and film transport equipment happened. Training at the famous Wood Norton Hall in Evesham where the BBC kept



fully equipped training studios were in operation. A lot of valve kit was there but it was great to go over the history of broadcast moving into latest kit.

Location work soon beckoned, which meant

travelling anywhere in the world with a portable tape recorder and microphones, part of a camera crew, which was using 16mm film cameras. Video camera and recorders arriving in the years afterwards. We worked with so many famous actors and contributors often in terrific locations.

Where this is leading is to my want to continue as a backroomer as I've retired from paid work, using audio kit as best as possible to enable a roomful of people hear what they came out to hear. Unlike my days at the BBC where if you needed kit, you went to stores that was packed with the stuff, I've provided myself with a limited amount, which makes it necessary to use what I have and changing it to the occasion as sensibly as I can think it will work out.

Should we ever be able to have another presentation at Westside Church or wherever, I hope you will give just a little thought to the old guy at the back trying to get everything trouble free for a relaxed presentation.

From the backroom boy
John Crossland.

A virtual visit to 575 Wandsworth Road

On 22 October members of the Society went on a virtual tour of 575 Wandsworth Road, a small domestic-scale property owned by the National Trust. Like many of those who 'joined' the tour, I had visited (in reality) before but this was on a dark evening, when the interior was lit by candlelight.

I was captivated as Laura Hussey, House Manager, wandered round the small Georgian terraced house showing the fretwork and other carvings which cover most of the interior walls, ceilings and doors. All were carved by Kenyan poet and mathematician Khadambe



Asalache, who became a Treasury civil servant here in London. He lived in the house for 20-odd years. He used only the simplest of tools and went out to scavenge discarded wood, floorboards and boxes. Initially he wanted to cover a damp patch in his dining room, but he obviously became hooked on carving and carried on – and on!

With the help of a head torch, Laura pointed out the animals, flowers and geometric shapes of the fret work, as well as some of the items he also collected over the years including lustreware and pressed glass. The overall effect is beautiful and quite unlike anywhere else. A treat.

Jenny Massey



We had this postcard in the 2008 Bedside with this caption

The Rustic Bridge on Wandsworth Common following a heavy fall of snow on 30 December 1908. That makes the image one hundred years old this Christmas.

And now in 2020 both we and it are twelve years older, how time flies.

From the Patrick Loobey Collection, with the assistance of the Wandsworth Historical Society

The Changing River Wandle



The River Wandle is an ever-popular subject among members and no less so in lockdown when on 12 October Emma Broadbent of the South East Rivers Trust gave us an excellent virtual talk on the work being undertaken by the Trust to improve the river and its green corridor.

The talk highlighted the work to naturalise the river, make it less prone to flooding and pollution and to improve biodiversity and public access. The Trust is working at softening the riverbanks by removing revetments and flattening out the steps created by historic weirs to create a more natural environment for fish and other wildlife. Channels are being created to ensure that in times of drought there is still safe passage for fish. Work parties are constantly tackling the removal of invasive species like Japanese Knotweed, reporting pollution incidents and clearing rubbish.

Improving the Wandle is nothing new: the River Wandle Opens Spaces Committee was formed as early as 1904 to encourage Local Authorities to acquire space for recreation along the river. Today the river flows through a number of large and small public parks from our own King George's Park to The Grove in Carshalton, including some semi-rural open spaces like Morden Hall Park and Beddington

Park. Enlargement and opening up of these open spaces is a continuing year by year and quite noticeable in my 40 years of walking and cycling along the river.

Looking back at the comprehensive *River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide*, published in 2012, we are reminded of the progress only dreamt of just 10 years ago. One of the most important local changes

for both walkers and habitats was the opening up in 2015 of the 11 acre Watermeads site with new paths, bridges and a sluice, to improve the wetlands habitat for wildlife. This offered the first public access to this nature reserve since Octavia Hill raised funds over 100 years ago to buy the land for the National Trust. Meanwhile, looking forward, we can expect further improvements to the whole river due to the Tideway sewer in 2025 which will control water flows in times of heavy rain. And before then the local projects will continue.

When normality returns you are encouraged to explore the Upper Wandle to see the natural chalk stream features; the Events Group may even be persuaded to offer a series of short walks!

Caroline Pook

The talk can be watched on You Tube on https://youtu.be/ebMHuX_vYAk

The *River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide* by Bob Steel & Derek Coleman is published by Culverhouse Books. Highly recommended for the historical background to the river.

The photograph of the Wandle at Merton Abbey Mills is by Garry Knight - Flickr: River Wandle

Swallow or Amazon?

a few disconnected thoughts from an old sea dog

Where do I start? – well, the beginning would be a good place.

First experience, on a motor-cruiser which my father had chartered on the Clyde, returning to the vessel's home port, without the necessary ensign (red, white or blue!!!), my mother very fortunately found a tea towel with a red cross on a



white background, to hoist on the backstay, which horrified my uncle, a naval man, who was meeting us. Both father and mother had a good laugh and lived on this for some time.

A canvass-bottomed sailing boat on the River Thames

was next. We could never get it going in the right direction and mostly finished up rowing the boat home. The canvas bottom always presented a hazard (health and safety bah humbug) as feet always seemed to be perilously close to going through the bottom.

Next came a racing dingy which was partly finished on arrival but spent many hours being completed and made to look nice and shiny with varnish. Towed behind my green mini we went to some odd places. One funny occasion was after a super sail in the Calshot Reach in the Solent making our way back to Hamble, where the boat was launched. We capsized just close to an old motor-cruiser on her berth, with very barnacled

sides and not thinking anyone was aboard but as the dingy started hitting its hull, we were confronted by a very grumpy face to be told to "go away". A bit difficult when capsized and waterlogged.

After a respectable interval, a trio of lads got together to

venture into big-boat sailing! I am sure that you know that the worst thing to have on board a boat is a naval officer, well I can tell you that the second worse thing is to have a trio of owners! Sometime later, each owner then brought on board a wife to make six "skippers" even more confusing! The only thing we agreed on most of the time was to have a good time and make sure that there was sufficient in the booze cupboard. Seriously we had some amazing fun and travelled the length of the south coast of England, France from Le Havre to Lorient but generally restricted by work commitments from cruising more at two weeks at a time.

I was asked if I had ever fallen overboard, yes, on one occasion in Yarmouth IOW harbour. Leaving our berth one evening with two small children, engine on, all lines gone, my wife at the helm I went up forward (that's the front) a line in my left hand (very important) to throw to a boat ahead to help us leave. Line chucked, me doing a summersault head over heels over the guard rail into the water. My main concern was to make sure I did not lose my lovely yellow wellies. Thankfully a harbourmaster's

boat soon appeared and I was fished out.

Sailing then became more of a delivery job with friends who owned other boats. A tremendous sail from Plymouth to Bilbao took us into unknown waters, during the passage the crew wound the skipper up by his not having the correct local flag to enter harbour.

Later on passage from Lagos in Portugal in 2001 we got the news of the 9/11 catastrophe in New York. The following day the boat was due to continue up the River Guadalquivir to Seville. The passage on the river was weird, it seemed that the world had stopped, there was no one around, no sounds, no nothing except the fish flying alongside the boat. We eventually reached the city, only to find that life goes on!

The Mediterranean has been an odd place to sail, sometimes wind blows strongly, then none at all. Not like Britain. A passage from Barcelona to Alghero (300 miles) was windless with a flat sea throughout. It becomes pretty boring only interrupted by a can of Coca Cola, or the occasional gin, but the night sky was wonderful.

One of my delights when sailing is fishing. When in Croatia going along nice and peacefully in the right direction I caught a small tuna, causing great delight until a cry rang out from the foredeck 'The water is getting

awfully clear and shallow', we had only gone down a wrong channel and very soon would have been stuck hard and fast. Thankfully we turned round backtracking until we found deeper water. The fish was delicious.

Greece and Turkey offer beautiful cruising grounds with lots of places to visit, relatively little bureaucracy and mostly people who understand that their livelihoods depend on the visitors by land or sea. Cruising in these waters gives one the opportunity to visit historic places such as Ephesus and Rhodes, and to sample ice creams of all flavours.

One memorable passage was through the Corinth Canal, towards Athens. Transiting boats have to wait for a convoy as there is insufficient room for vessels to pass in the Canal. What a feat of engineering, and all without modern technology.

The Atlantic is a big place, derogatorily known as "the pond". A bit more than a pond. The passage took 22 days from Tenerife with five people on board. During this time we had no really bad weather, some spectacular rain storms, thunderstorms and brilliantly lit starlight nights. My favourite star was one that appeared over the stern (back) of the boat which seemed to twinkle a bit more than others. We swam one day midway and were told off when we got to Antigua that we were stupid as sharks

were renown for sensing such things. Fishing again, the only thing I caught on the way across was a J-cloth! Don't know how or why it was there. One day a whale approached from astern to look at us, I had my fishing gear out at the time and the skipper said later that he had never seen anyone get from the cabin to the stern quicker than I that day, I was worried that the whale might take my lure!!!

Antigua was brilliant. Unfortunately as we had taken a couple more days than expected to cross we had only four days to enjoy the sights, sounds, food and rum of the island. What a wonderful four days as the flight home beckoned.

Norway is a bit different. We crossed the Arctic Circle at about 02.00hrs. What delight, warm weather, almost full daylight with the sun dipping below the horizon for about half an hour. Walking to a glacier and then venturing onto the surface another experience of visiting far away places. Mid summer in Norway is celebrated with gusto and this is understandable as so much cold and dark is experienced at the other end of the year.

Where next, who knows but my quest for new horizons is not diminished. Only creaky hips and domestic responsibilities will prevail.

(Capt.) Philip Whyte

What can YouTube do for you?

Many members of the Society are passionate about music – I'm one of them although perhaps not quite of the genre that our famous soirées are known for. So, when lockdown started one big downside was no more full-on live musical experiences whether chamber music at the Wigmore, or the rear chamber at the Half Moon, Putney.

But rather than feeling deprived, I was delighted to discover what may be



described as 'almost' live music in our living room. Forgive me if all this is old hat to aficionados but with Lockdown 2.0, I thought there might be a few among us unaware of the bottomless

bonanza that is YouTube. If you have a smart TV YouTube may offer a more enjoyable Christmas.

Our recent house move prompted the acquisition of a 'smart' TV and during Lockdown 1.0 we eventually succumbed to Netflix but only a few weeks ago discovered the potential of YouTube on the big screen. Now if you have even a small laptop you know about YouTube – very cool, useful and interesting stuff (I think they've deleted the page on how to make an H-bomb)! - but I didn't twig how amazing it could be especially for music at near life size. Sure, I'd watched a few clips on my desktop but on a 49" hi-def screen in the sitting/living room WOW! Concerts I had missed, some I'd even attended, like Mick Fleetwood's Palladium tribute to Peter Green in February. And bands I had

lost track of years ago. On top of that my brother's band in Germany and my son's electro ensemble, Tangents in Sydney, and our much missed friend, Paschal Allen in full voice – in our living room! I remain blown away by the list of benefits which on their own would have been enough to warrant an upgrade to a smart TV.

If you've got access and haven't explored YouTube you have a treat in store whatever your favoured genre of music or comedy - it will lessen the gloom of lockdowns. Just list any musician, comedian, gig or concert, any genre, from millions of clips.

My delight was triggered when I found a whole bunch of Dutch blues musicians I'd heard 30 years ago and vainly searched for over the years. I found original footage and new material like a duet by Jan Akkerman (ex Focus) and Eelco Gelling (Cuby & the Blizzards) the most beautiful blues duet instrumental I've ever heard from guys who had long lost their shoulder length hair. I followed their careers up to the present – it's all there. You not only listen to the music you get to know the musicians! In short I find I'm dividing my watching almost equally between Netflix / BBC News etc / YouTube !

Rock on and Jingle Bells to all

Bruce St Julian-Bown

NOTE: You can access YouTube free (with ads that can be closed after 5 secs) or a subscription service without ads. You cannot use material for other purposes without permission. Artists can generate income – please check all info on-line.

They also serve ...



Did you leave your abode during the lockdown to give the NHS workers a well-deserved Appreciation ? ... with our neighbours we were clapping to the Skies every Thursday evening ... But did you notice that all through this year our Dustmen have carried on as though nothing was happening ... every week without fail at roughly the same time there they were coming up the street ... always with a good morning and a big smile ... So my wife and I went out one morning and gave them a clap ... We got a big smile back and a thank you ...

Makes life just that little bit nicer all-round

Will Holland

The back page

For many years the back cover of The Bedside was adorned with a series of lovely handwritten messages from Jinnie Moore of The Lucky Parrot – both much missed.

This one, from the 2006 Bedside, will hopefully jog a fond memory or two of Jinnie, Apollo (the parrot) hours of browsing, the temptation of curios – and because it cropped up on a trawl through the archives, and was a bit of an inspiration for the front cover of this 2020 Bedside..

