

# PASS



## The Quarterly Magazine Of The **MASTERMIND CLUB**

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December 1994

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Editorial</b>                  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Production notes</b>           | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Membership Matters</b>         | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Festive shopping</b>           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>From our Canadian reporter</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Of Ham and Marble Hill</b>     | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Functionally speaking</b>      | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>MQ95 Round 2</b>               | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>More on Mee</b>                | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Rollright rods</b>             | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Temporally speaking</b>        | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Fishy matters</b>              | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Miss Fishpool</b>              | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Around Britain's towns</b>     | <b>16</b> |

**EDITORIAL***Patricia Cowley*

**C**raig and I have been struggling (well, I've been struggling, Craig endeavouring to teach me) to master the Club's recently acquired computer. My talents are many, but they don't include an immediate rapport with things mechanical! I'm also suffering from what might be called the White Knight syndrome: It's not its name, it's what it's called. But Craig is being very patient and I'm sure I'll get there eventually.

The *Mastermind* team's move to Manchester has really happened at last, and when they're all back to normal I hope to persuade one of the team to do me a piece about What It Was Like. A big welcome to Dee Wallis who has just been made an Honorary Member of the Club. We hope it will compensate for all the aggro she's been experiencing recently.

Meanwhile, the present season of *Mastermind* recordings is well under way, and good luck to those of you who have been brave enough to have a second go. This includes Phillida Grantham, whose specialist subject this time is Champagne.

Phillida has tickets available for these upcoming recordings: 18th January at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds; 22nd February at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. Do contact her if you would like some.

Apart from the 'second triers', I have a note from semi-finalist Indrani Hettiaratchi telling of her spectacular win – a fur coat, furniture, and a holiday in Austria – on the *Wheel of Fortune* due to be shown on 31st October, and a rather rueful list from Brian Bovington of shows – *Countdown*, *Going for Gold*, and *Big Break* – in which he failed auditions (but he adds, on a happier note, that he has now achieved membership of Mensa). Any more triumphs out there?

I expect quite a few of you read the letter in *Radio Times* from the silly fellow who thought the BBC ought to save money (and presumably lower the licence fee) by abandoning what he saw as the 'exotic' locales of *Mastermind*, and stick to recordings in the studio. But as Penny explained, an outside venue is hardly more expensive than the studio, and adds immeasurably to the attraction of the programme. And it also gives audiences all round the country a chance to watch the programme 'live', which must give a lot of pleasure. Down with the killjoys!

It only remains for me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, wherever you may be. Me, I'm off to Chester – not the Grosvenor this time but an inferior put-u-up, worth it for the opportunity to worship at the shrine of my adored

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***Contributions are welcome but may be edited owing to space limitations***

***Patricia Cowley, Editor***

***Craig Scott, Production***

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Craig Scott*

**W**ell, friends, PASS is edging a bit further down the sliproad leading to the Information Superhighway. As Patricia mentions, she has been getting to grips with the Beast Whose Number Is 486.

It's been quite a training challenge, introducing someone with no experience of it to the wonderful world of personal computing. But we're getting there; Patricia typed most of the pieces (gave the spellchecker a bit of a workout, but hey, that's what it's there for).

I am heartened as well by the number of electronic contributions to this issue: thanks to Chris Pelly, Gerald MacKenzie, Barbara-Anne Eddy, and John Flashman. This lightens our workload considerably, as we don't need to retype your golden words.

It seems apposite to repeat the guidelines for contributions to PASS.

### Formats

**W**e produce PASS on an IBM-compatible PC. Any text not on disk is keyed into **Microsoft Word** (version 6) and laid out in **Ventura**.

Your article can be submitted in any major PC word-processing format (Word, WordPerfect, AmiPro, Wordstar, etc.); if in doubt save the file in ASCII format (your WP manual should tell you how).

Feel free to call me for advice on formats (especially Macintosh and Amstrad PCW). If your system can produce a file on floppy disk, we can probably figure out how to use it.

**Please, please, please** resist the temptation to employ:

- ◆ tab stops to indent paragraphs (or separate question numbers and questions in quizzes)
- ◆ extra spaces to separate sentences
- ◆ extra carriage returns to separate paragraphs

You've no idea how much hassle this causes; I have to take all this formatting out before I can format the piece properly. Remember – **no** indents, **one** space after each sentence, **one** return after each paragraph.

Important: **Label** your disk clearly, please, with your name, date, and word-processing format (*e.g.*, **WordPerfect 5.2**). Delete all other files from the disk. Include a hard copy and write the file name on that, too. This saves a great deal of experimentation and aggro, and we don't want any secrets between us, do we?

### Visuals

**W**e can incorporate a wide range of visual material, from disk or paper. Quality of image is important. A Xerox copy of a newspaper item is unlikely to reproduce well. Again, call me for advice on graphic formats or other issues.

### Deadlines

**P**ASS is assembled and published four times a year, during February/March, May/June, August/September, and November/December.

Therefore, please try to get your piece to us by the **middle** of January, April, July, or October, respectively; but you can allow yourself an extra **fortnight** if it's on disk **and** we know it's coming.

We try to keep to a regular schedule, but delays may result from the pressure of other commitments. Please check with Patricia on the exact deadline and publication dates for a particular issue, especially if you are publicising an event or setting the cutoff date for quiz entries.

### Editing

**T**o give you some idea of how many words fill a given space, a full page of dense type fills about 800 words in PASS (if you're setting a quiz, that's about 55-60 questions). It helps if you aim for multiples of this figure.

My layout nightmare is a closely argued piece which runs two lines off the page. In such cases we try to wield the electronic scalpel in a sympathetic manner. Your article may also need to be retitled.

While we aim to publish all members' contributions, the Committee must be the final judge of the suitability of any material.

### The Future

**I** have recently been overhauling my own computer system, and am now about ready to **go online!** I will be reporting on my experience in future issues. It seems a natural for Masterminders – instant access to the whole world's store of trivial, useless, wondrous knowledge.

Are any of you already surfing the Internet, leaving messages for Bill Clinton, downloading massive amounts of arcane information from exotic places? Share your exploits with us.

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS***Peter Chitty**Welcome to these new members*

800 Michael Lane  
 801 Colin Edward Capell  
 803 Christopher Hampton  
 804 Martin Cresdee  
 805 Stephen Smithers  
 806 Edmund John Broadbent

*A special welcome to an honorary member*

802 Dee Wallis

**CLUB SHOPPING***Patricia Owen*

**New for Christmas – the Club Pen!** After much effort, we now have available a limited number of handsome ‘Regent’ ballpoint pens. These 1950s-style pens – in smart black with gold Mastermind Club logo and trim – take a standard refill and come in individual soft pouches. Just the thing for holiday giving at £2.50 (including p&p) for a single pen, or £2.00 if you order more than one at the same time. You’ll feel a great burst of mental power surge through your fingers every time you pick one up!

The ‘hard insignia’, in gilt and black enamel, bear the chair and wreath but no club name. Ties have the chair only (single- or multi-logo). Sweatshirts and T-shirts have chair, wreath, and name on left shoulder.

All items are available from:

**Patricia Owen**

Enclose your name, address, membership number, and cheque payable to “Mastermind Club”.

|  | £     |
|--|-------|
| <b>Ties</b>                            |       |
| Desert Sand, multi-logo                | 5.00  |
| Light Navy or Silver Grey, single-logo | 6.00  |
| <b>Sweatshirts (XL=48-50")</b>         |       |
| <i>New</i>                             |       |
| Burgundy (M, L, XL)                    | 12.00 |
| Navy (L, XL)                           | 12.00 |
| White (M, L, XL)                       | 12.00 |
| <i>To Clear</i>                        |       |
| Yellow (XL only)                       | 10.50 |
| Emerald (S only)                       | 8.00  |
| Silver Grey (S only)                   | 6.00  |
| <b>T-shirts (XL=42")</b>               |       |
| Royal (S, M)                           | 6.50  |
| Gold (S)                               | 6.50  |
| Red, (XL)                              | 6.50  |
| Heather Grey (L, XL)                   | 6.50  |
| <b>Hard insignia</b>                   |       |
| <i>New</i>                             |       |
| Brooches (improved pin)                | 5.00  |
| Tie clips                              | 7.50  |
| Cuff links                             | 10.00 |
| <i>To Clear</i>                        |       |
| Brooches and pendants (each)           | 5.00  |
| Stick pins                             | 5.00  |

**OFF TO THE AGM!****Barbara-Anne Eddy**

Those of you who have attended Mastermind Club AGMs regularly have probably noticed that, like a bad penny, I've turned up every two years. I didn't consciously plan these biennial visits, which have brought me to the meetings in Edinburgh in 1990, Cardiff in 1992, and Chester this year; however, for a number of reasons, things have just turned out that way.

The most important reason is financial. Each trip to Britain costs me between \$3,000 and \$4,000 Canadian (roughly £1,500 to £2,100), and with the kinds of work I've been doing lately, I need that long to save up (or, more accurately, to pay off the credit-card charges!). During the "off" years, I've sometimes spent my vacation from one job working at another, taking only short weekend breaks to allow me to afford a longer holiday time in Britain. Next year, however, my sister and I have a bit of a special project: we want to go to Los Angeles to try out as contestants on a "team" version of *Wheel of Fortune*.

My past few trips have had two of what I might call "bookends" defining their beginning and end. The Mastermind Club AGM has been the final event; this year, for example, my host (Morag Knox-Crawford's cousin Stella Shaw, who was kind enough to put me up while her regular lodger visited her family in Spain) drove me to the railway station in Chester before 8 a.m. on the Monday after the meeting, so that I could catch a train (change at Crewe)



to London and thence right out to Heathrow to board a 2pm flight back to Vancouver.

The opening "bookend" has been equally interesting; a friend of mine, a retired community-college instructor turned author, who was at one time a professional actor in Britain, conducts annual theatre tours to London each February, before the expensive tourist season starts. Unlike other tours, this one has an educational component: each participant must make a presentation about one of the plays that tour members are scheduled to visit (this year, mine dealt with Derek Jacobi's *Macbeth*). Besides providing useful information, the seminars also allow participants to deduct part of the cost from their income tax as an educational expense.

So, I spend the first seven to ten days of my holiday revelling in the theatrical delights of London, not only those which are part of the tour package, but also those that I can cram into odd moments, as well as visits to some of my favourite London locations, such as the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden and Foyles bookstore in Charing Cross Road. Between the theatre tour and the AGM, almost anything can happen: for example, this year, thanks to Margery Elliott, who kindly put me up, I had the chance to spend three days "going to the dogs" at the Crufts show in Birmingham (information about the 1995 show arrived at my house last week; unfortunately, I don't think I'll make it). I also visited Newcastle-upon-Tyne for more theatre: the RSC staged *The Merchant of Venice*, Ibsen's *Ghosts*, and Goldoni's *The Venetian Twins* there, and I took an evening tour of Newcastle's haunted places. I did have some disappointments this year: as a longtime supporter of Gerald Durrell's zoo in Jersey, I try to get to the Channel Islands whenever I visit Britain, but a combination of badly organized ferries, lack of space on airplane flights, and unavailability of hotel rooms during the time I could travel there made a visit this year impossible. The same turned out to be true regarding a side trip to Malta, which Peter and Nina Richardson had recommended to me; it seemed to be a case of "you can't get there from here," at least in the limited time I had available.

Oh, well, maybe next time! I'm even now making tentative plans for 1996, and look forward to visiting the AGM wherever it takes place.

## HAUNTED HOUSES

*Michael Davison*

**E**arly in October, a group of some 30 Mastermind Club members visited Ham House, a wonderfully preserved early-17thC. house by the Thames near Richmond. The outing was smoothly organised as usual by Phillida Grantham [and Michael Davison – PG].

We met the scheming Elizabeth Murray, Countess of Dysart, who set her cap at John Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale, used her influence with Cromwell to save Maitland's life after the Civil War, married him – then reaped her reward when Lauderdale became one of Charles II's most powerful ministers. Elizabeth could spend, spend, spend on the house of her dreams.

### **Courtiers and servants**

**W**e saw, in our mind's eye, the Carolean courtiers politicking in dining room, withdrawing room, and closet – with servants gliding in and out about their duties, vanishing discreetly into the corridors alongside the main rooms. We followed the steps of the Duchess from her bedchamber down a spiral staircase to her 'bathing room', the very latest refinement in 1677.

Members had mixed feelings about the repainting of the Great Hall, where the bright colours that some remembered from earlier visits have been stripped off in favour of a stone-coloured floor-to-ceiling paint said to reproduce the authentic style of 1770.

### **A friendly presence**

**O**ur guides included the Administrator, Robert Pritchard, and his wife Chris, conveniently the Assistant Administrator. They have lived in an apartment in one wing throughout the recent restoration, and have formed a close attachment to the house.

"Is it haunted?" we asked.

"Of course, I can feel Elizabeth's presence," said Chris. "She's friendly, because I love the house as she did. And when I walk around the house at night I often talk to her about it."

### **On to Marble Hill**

**A**fter lunch in the refurbished Orangery, we moved on – some by perilous foot ferry across the Thames, others by car – to Marble Hill House. Here English Heritage is restoring the splendours of the 1740s and 1750s, when Henrietta Howard, mistress of George II and later Countess of Suffolk, played hostess at Marble Hill to a salon of statesmen and artists.

Wallpaper painstakingly recreated from a few tiny, faded fragments; tables made for the house but lost for 150 years before coming to light in Australia in 1987; paintings of Roman scenes commissioned for Lady Suffolk and recovered from New York and France in 1992; the detective work and craftsmanship employed in this sympathetic restoration are evident in every one of Marble Hill's grand, but not overpowering, rooms.

## SUGGESTION

*From The Times 23rd July 1994*

Sir

World Cup organisers could follow the example of Mastermind on TV. In the event of a draw the side with the least number of passes is the winner.

Dr G Murray-Jones

## STOP PRESS

**M**argery Elliott informs us that she will be appearing on two quizzes on the same day, **23rd January 1995.**

- ◆ *Counterpoint* 12:25 Radio 4 (repeated 25th 18:30)
- ◆ *Timekeepers* 13:50 BBC1-TV



## THE RETURN TO ALBERTOPOLIS *Tony Dart*

**F**or the Club's 1995 AGM and Annual Function (7th-9th April 1995), we will be returning to the scene of the 1993 triumph: Linstead Hall and the Southside Conference Centre at Imperial College, London.

If you attended in 1993, you will not need reminding of the Kensington location (a short walk to the Albert Hall, Science, Geology, Natural History and V&A Museums, not to mention Harrods), the convenient public transport and very cheap secure parking.

Most importantly, Imperial have restored Linstead Hall's catering, unavailable in 1993, so now all meals may be taken in Linstead Dining Room. These include the Annual Dinner and all the breakfasts – no walking to Sheffield this time! We will still use the Conference Centre, but only for the Master Quiz final and AGM, where theatre and PA facilities are essential.

Even better news is that the Club has held its dinner price at the 1993 level and there is only a tiny increase in Imperial's accommodation charges, so 1995 will be even better value. The BBC in its generosity continues to invite Club members to Saturday lunch – but space is limited and restricted to members on a first-to-book basis.

Organised events over the weekend include:

- ◆ Friday evening: buffet supper and wine, followed by a repeat of the conducted tour of the mews area towards Knightsbridge
- ◆ Saturday morning/afternoon: free to explore, unless you are going to the BBC lunch
- ◆ Saturday evening: 1995 Annual Dinner (wine included) in Linstead Hall, the Master Quiz Final in Southside Lecture Theatre, cash bar open until midnight
- ◆ Sunday morning: 1995 AGM in Southside Lecture Theatre followed by buffet lunch, again with wine included

As usual, there are two booking forms. The Club's events form, which everyone needs, goes to Phillida Grantham with a cheque to Mastermind Club, and the accommodation form goes to Imperial College with payment to them. The Club is *not* involved in accommodation booking; please sort out any difficulties directly with Imperial.

Two final points: don't forget your Mugnum question, with its answer in a sealed envelope bearing only your membership number, and please don't send a postdated cheque, or your booking will be placed in File WPB.

See you there!

## MASTER QUIZ 95 ROUND 2 *Gerald MacKenzie*

**EXORDIUM ET APOLOGIA:** I hope you will enjoy and enter the Quiz and that you will forgive any of the almost-inevitable deficiencies.

Having been unwell and confined to bed for three weeks before this issue's deadline, due to a severe post-traumatic and crush syndrome, I have been very restricted in my normal processes and access to references and sources. Therefore, this is essentially a question sequence from personal knowledge through free association – there is a flow but the themes are **not** compartmentalised.

### **Rules For Entries**

**P**repare two entries, clearly marked "U" and "R".

- ◆ "U" **unseen:** mandatory, no help.
- ◆ "R" **reference:** optional, for second thoughts – reference books or

whatever – but must be your own, unaided effort.

### **Deadlines**

**Tuesday 14th February 1995** – the sole exception is Tuesday 14th March 1995 for new or overseas members.

### **Accessibility**

**P**lease enclose your address and telephone number for the period 15th March–7th April 1995 if you are a new member or if you will be away from your normal abode (the one on the Club records).

## MASTER QUIZ 95 ROUND 2 QUESTIONS

### A Clinical and Post-Traumatic Quiz from the couch of Gerald MacKenzie

#### *Acta et opera*

- Does the Lady of the TV series "To the Manor Born" appreciate that some customs are honoured more in the breach than in the observance? Reference and explanation please!
- What was the ultimate destination of the "other", Scottish, potential claimant to the throne of Elizabeth I, confined in Hardwicke Hall by Bess of Hardwicke? Bonus on offer.
- Who was the Winter Queen?
- Who was the last English, Queen Consort to remarry?
- Why did Charles II pull down Nonsuch Palace?
- By what name is the Teatro Flaviano usually and better known?
- Who said in 279BC "One more such victory and we are undone", just after beating the Romans at Asculum yet again?
- Which Byzantine Empress, subsequently canonised, was crowned on 4 April, 527AD?
- Why are ostrich eggs suspended in Eastern Churches?
- How many and what is the provenance of the throne/chair of states in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace?
- "Careful"! Which breed of dog encompasses such varieties as Prince Charles, Ruby and Blenheim?
- Who are the co-rulers of Andorra?
- Which British Monarch died of a ruptured, dissecting aneurysm of the aorta while straining at stool?
- Which English Monarch died of a surfeit of peaches and cream?
- Which English King died of a surfeit of lampreys and, for a bonus, why?

#### *More Aquatic Exercises*

- What was the toxin in the duck paste which caused the tragic fatalities among the picnickers on Loch Maree, Ross-shire, in 1924?
- Which author created the characters of Commodore Jack Aubrey and Doctor Stephen Maturin?
- Who wrote "I come ....from Haunt of Coot and Hern"?
- Who wrote (truly metaphysically?!?):  
Come live with and be my love  
And we will some new pleasures prove  
Of golden sands and christall brookes  
With silken lines and silver hookes
- Precisely, what was the original argosy?
- Why did the British Government award £20,000 to John Harrison in 1772?
- In the Royal Navy, what is the Tupperware Task Force?

- What is the derivation of the traditional naval term Dog Watch for the two 2-hour watches between 4 and 8pm?
- Who was the first European to navigate the North-West passage by sea, and why did he set off in secret?
- What is an El Niño, and what are the elemental, and often catastrophic, climatic changes associated with it?
- Where did George Orwell write *1984* and what is the name of the Great Whirlpool nearby, which may have affected his thoughts?
- Who is the author of *Foucault's Pendulum*?
- What is the Coriolis Effect? Does it have any connection with the previous question?
- What is the connection between King Arthur's half-sister Morgan-le-Fay, Calabria and The Straits of Messina?
- In sport fishing, which activity is controlled by the I.C.A.F.?

#### *Random Draughts of My Net*

- Which alcoholically insane musician's saxophone was auctioned at Christies in September 1994 for £93,000?
- Which writer has just discharged her filial duty by "Looking for Mr Nobody"?
- Which eponymous theatrical character is based on Peter Llewellyn Davies?
- Which nursery rhyme characters had their epigrammatic origins in the rivalry of the musicians Handel and Bononcini?
- Whose petnames were Mrs Morley and Mrs Freeman?
- What is Inspector Clouseau's Christian name?
- In the *Peanuts* cartoons, what is Snoopy's brother called?
- What begins as the Florida Current, and ends as the North Cape Current?
- In the cathedral of which town of sacred and secular pilgrimage (also the birthplace of a celebrated author), was Saint Canute (Knud II) assassinated?
- Graced by the Little Mermaid, where and, in a phrase, how did Nelson humiliate Admiral Sir Hyde Parker?
- Where are Markham's Hole, Clay Deep and the Deep Silver Pit?
- When was the Thames flood barrier commissioned and when was it officially opened?
- In which classic adventure story was Annabelle Smith killed with a carving knife by a nine-and-a-half fingered man, from Killin, Perthshire?
- What do Exeter and Whisky have in common?
- Which historic house was the headquarters of the Parliamentary commander during the English Civil War while besieging Exeter and Powderham Castle?

46. Surprise! Surprise! The Chimaera is alive and well, not just as in the beautiful bronze representation in the Archaeological Museum in Florence, but closer to home – what is its form and family, and what is its nickname?
47. According to its creator, an American surfer, after which drink do you walk into a wall?
48. To which comestibles did Marshall Plessis-Praslin and Anna Pavlova give their names?
49. What are the distinctive features of a Battenberg cake?
50. What is the famous Sachertorte? Two members and their wives indulged themselves at Sacher's recently!
51. What is the name given to cold leek and potato soup?
52. In the rhyme, what happened to the maid while her mistress was eating bread and honey?
53. How many blackbirds were baked in the pie?
54. What is the alliterative diet associated with the alliterative syndrome of the vitamin deficiency disease, pellagra – dermatitis, diarrhoea and dementia – found in Negroes and poor whites in the Deep South?
55. How did arsenic prove an effective preservative of Madeleine Smith's skin and looks?
56. Nauseating? What is the active preservative ingredient in tartar emetic?
57. Need help? What is a lazaret or lazaretto?
58. Where would you seek the designation *Trois Étoiles*?
59. Why might Franklin D. Roosevelt's statue have been more comfortably seated in Hyde Park?
60. Whose ghost is said to haunt the White House?
61. Who was the six foot rabbit eponymously invisible to all but James Stewart?
62. Who was Beethoven's dark lady?
63. Who was *Playboy* magazine's first Playmate of the Month?
64. Which beautiful pianist was first married to the Earl of Harewood?
65. Where in the UK has a major new Opera House been constructed by the private sector? Who is or should be eating his heart out?
66. What reviving ingredient is in MacKenzie's Smelling Salts (or Spirits of Hartshorn)?
67. What is a tussie-mussie, (more appropriate for a young lady)?
68. To which genus do houseplants with striped leaves (e.g., Wandering Jew and Spiderwort) belong?
69. Which ballet dancer created the roles of the "Firebird" and the "Spectre of the Rose"?
70. Contemporary TV quote: who said "I don't think it's necessary to become, you know, a luvvey"?
71. Who were Mary's friends Mungo and Midge?
72. Name two radio series by Edward J. Mason and Geoffrey Webb?
73. What date did Classic FM go on air?
74. What is the function of the Dolby system?
75. What is the function of Young's modulus?
76. What fibre is moleskin cloth manufactured from?
77. What animals collect in singulars?
78. As well as peas, which animals go into pods?
79. Which is the world's fastest mammal over distances up to 4 miles?
80. Which was New Zealand's largest bird?
81. What momentous find of ornithological artistic treasure was auctioned in London in October 1994.
82. What is the golfer's favourite bird?
83. Which golfer has failed to become World Matchplay Champion for the seventh time?
84. Which sportsmen are known as dry-bobs and wet-bobs?
85. Where, after driving 24hrs non-stop, would you possibly have driven 12hrs to seek rest and relaxation in hydrotherapy? Please explain.
86. More seriously, what, in Government, are the dual roles of Sir Robin Butler?
87. Who is the Prime Minister of Canada?
88. What was the significance of the Swiss calling their hypothyroid dwarfs cretins?
89. By what name are members of the Unification Church usually known?
90. Which Canadian tribe recently rose in armed revolt to claim their ancestral tribal land?
91. Which people's society and culture were overrun by the forces of Islam in North Africa in the seventh century?
92. Which national flag is plain emerald green?
93. Where is Moldava, whose virtually unknown football team humiliated Wales 3 goals to 2 in October 1994 to lead Group 7 in the European Championship?
94. How often is the Fastnet Race held?
95. What is a St Martin's Summer?
96. What percentage of the human body weight do muscles account for? And, for a bonus, how many are there?
97. What is the usual, standard content of a beer can in the UK?
98. What much-coveted artefacts, produced by the Shaker religious community in the USA, are now almost extinct?
99. According to legend, which Asiatic people were descended from the union of a monkey and a female demon?
100. According to Islamic tradition, where did Adam settle after his expulsion from Paradise?

**For tiebreakers or bonus, appropriately, perhaps**

- A. Which war artist is currently exhibiting his rather imaginative views of the Bosnian conflict at the Imperial War Museum?
- B. What is a "Cadmean Victory"?

**MEE TOO****Anne Hegerty**

I was delighted to read Wendy Forrester's reminiscences of Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopaedia*. I encountered it some time in the 1960s, in the 1905 edition, full of thrilling items about how to kill yourself (suck six sulphur-headed matches one after the other) and why man would never reach the moon (there being no atmosphere, space travel would be like trying to swim in an empty swimming-bath).

My favourites were the French tutorials, consisting of a line of French, followed by the literal English translations, followed by the colloquial English. The middle line was always the most gripping, and I cherish the memory of two people having a blazing row and one storming out screaming, "I not to you will speak more never!" An exit line I have been awaiting an opportunity to use ever since.

**AND MEE****Patricia Cowley**

Wendy Forrester's delightful piece on the *Children's Encyclopaedia* sent me off on a happy journey down Memory Lane, as I too was brought up on this noble work. It says much for my parents that on my fifth birthday they gave me the deluxe edition (chestnut leather tooled in gold, yah boo sucks to Wendy's aunt), and from then on I never looked back. Almost everything I now know I originally read in these volumes; until I left home at the age of twenty, hardly a day passed that I, and subsequently my brother and sister, did not consult them for something, and they certainly led to my ultimate arrival in the Black Chair. I wonder how many other Club members owe their presence on the show to the same source.

intake, to the extent that, later on, I was surprised when no one else appeared to have heard of them. To this day I could make an old Irishwoman and her pig out of potatoes, or a handkerchief sachet embroidered with the red poppy, and I should know exactly what action to take when faced with the problem of how to get to an island in the middle of a rectangular lake with only two short planks to hand (you put one diagonally across one corner and the other at right angles to it).

It's funny how the same things make the same impression – I too vividly remember the Japanese girl with the bowl on her head and the stirring story of Barbara Frietchie. I can still see Simon de Montfort riding down the nave of Winchester Cathedral, Linnaeus on his knees giving thanks for the gorse, the infant Canova carving a lifelike lion out of a lump of butter, and 'the wonderful head of David as it looks down on Florence'. By the time I was seven I knew what every well-known picture, statue and building in the world looked like (the Flat-Iron Building in New York, now swamped by skyscrapers, springs to mind as one of the most impressive), and such diverse characters as Father Damien, Bernard Palissy and Grace Darling were part of my daily

The *Encyclopaedia* also left me with an abiding love for the Pre-Raphaelites, who were used copiously to illustrate the Bible, Greek and Roman legends, and the Arthurian tales. Quite recently I was delighted to encounter 'Sir Galahad', whom I hadn't seen for decades, in Eton College Chapel.

To my shame, the science-based sections did not hold the same charm for me, and I still regret not having pursued the study of the night sky. Come to think of it, this might still be the easiest way to bone up on Astronomy.

I think the secret of the success and fascination of this masterwork was the fact that all the (immensely varied) information was provided in small helpings. Five minutes would suffice to take in a whole section of 'Things to Make and Do', 'Men and Women' or 'Picture Atlas', then the grasshopper child mind could skip to something else equally easy to assimilate in a small dose. And there was a spin-off too, which John Flashman will tell us about.

## THE CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER *John Flashman*

Imagine that most members of the Mastermind Club will have some recollection of the *Children's Newspaper*, or the CN as it was generally known. This publication, unrivalled in its time, was founded by Arthur Mee, who held the post of editor until his death in 1943.

The paper was published weekly in a tabloid format and survived for over 2,000 issues from March 1919 to May 1965, reaching a peak circulation of half a million. It comprised twelve pages, apart from the war years when paper shortages reduced this to eight. Initially it cost three-halfpence, but by World War II it had increased to threepence, maintained until 1960 when it went up to fivepence. By the time it closed, its price had risen to ninepence.

The CN's policy could not have been more simple: it selected items from the world's press and rewrote them in a style designed to appeal to young readers. The CN was intensely patriotic but never resorted to sensationalism. As I recall, crime and tragedy had no place amongst its pages. Although it catered for all ages, nobody over sixteen was allowed to enter any of its competitions and its main readership would have consisted of children aged between about nine and fifteen.

I remember deriving much pleasure from the various news items and snippets of information in each issue as well as the more regular features which were presented each week. The features which remained unchanged over the years included general comment on selected issues of the day, news items from around the world, CN Bookshelf, and articles on Astronomy, Nature Study and Stamp News. Bedtime Corner was for younger readers but The Editor's Table set a high moral tone for all with its miscellany of anecdotes and verses, often with religious overtones. Lighter relief was provided by Under The Editor's Table featuring a character called Peter Puck. On the back page was The Bran Tub with jokes, puzzles, a crossword, riddles and, in the 1940s at least, details of programmes to be broadcast on Children's Hour on the Home Service during the coming week.

The CN had some photographic illustrations and also carried advertisements which were either aimed directly at children or through them at parents. I never seemed to have enough pocket money to be able to respond to the small-ads which mainly

concentrated on stamps, other collectables, toys and gadgets; on the other hand more advertising space was given to such wholesome products as California Syrup of Figs, Oxo, Ovaltine, Haliborange and Dental Magnesia. A certain amount of psychology must have gone into these adverts, as shown by The Three Mustardeers, an adventure strip issued by Colman's Mustard, the intention presumably being that you would beg your parents to buy the product and make mustard an indispensable part of every meal, thus keeping your brains in good fettle. There were also the Rowntrees Gumsters with the redoubtable Ronnie the Gumster and his range of tricks, one of which I use to this day to impress small children of my acquaintance.

I think it was around 1950 that the format was extended to other regular features. There was a photo-page covering an item of special interest, a serial adventure story, Picture-News and Time Map (a map of the world with time differences and insets putting news stories in their geographical places), a film review column, Zoo Review and even a weekly Report from Parliament. The classics were also represented in picture-story form and some recognition was given to contemporary sport by means of a feature column called Sports Shorts. One thing the paper did not have in my day was a Readers' Letters section, although I think this did appear later in the 1960s.

The CN also ran regular series of competitions with prizes. The competitions themselves were fairly straightforward, such as colouring a picture or unscrambling anagrams, but entrants were warned that neatness was of paramount importance. There was also the famous CN National Handwriting Test, entries for which had to be submitted through schools and which I recall was almost invariably won by girls! The prizes for the competitions were quite good; bicycles and wristwatches were generally the order of the day with ten-shilling notes or fountain pens being awarded to runners-up. But I always felt that it was a bit of a cheat that the winner of the Handwriting Test (for which you had to copy out a selected piece of prose such as the Kerb Drill) received £5 whereas the school itself received £25.

The CN tended to be selective in its readership and in the post-war years, at least, it was hard to obtain. In my home town it could only be purchased through a regular order with the local newsagent.

## THE CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER (cont.)

Sadly, by the time my sister and I were old enough to be interested in it there was a long waiting list of potential subscribers. As it turned out, we never were able to have our own copy. Ironically, a close friend who did receive the paper every week used to regard it with a particular contempt and usually discarded it unread. I suspect he was not alone in regarding the CN as somewhat "prissy"; other former subscribers have told me that they would never have admitted to their schoolmates that they were among its readers.

Doubtless parents saw the paper as educational and instructional and bought it in the hope that it would encourage their children to read and learn, but in reality I suspect that most of this coerced readership would cheerfully have traded in the CN for the latest Enid Blyton.

Nevertheless it surprises me that few of my contemporaries are able to recall the CN in any detail. A sizeable number admit to having taken it as children but none has been able to

recall its actual content or coverage with any degree of clarity. Perhaps this provides an explanation for the paper's sad decline and eventual demise; the decision to cease publication in 1965 was, I believe, taken because it was realised that the CN no longer appealed to the current generation.

There seems to be no official history or anthology of the newspaper nor, so far as I have been able to find out, was a Children's Newspaper Annual produced in any of the years, which perhaps is a bit surprising. I can, however, report that the British Library at Colindale holds a complete set of all issues. Sadly, enquiries made of specialist dealers in old magazines and periodicals suggest that copies of the paper are impossible to obtain nowadays; it would be interesting to know if any Club member has a collection. Of course, in the days when the newspaper was king, most homes were heated by solid fuel and all discarded paper was avidly hoarded for firelighting. I wonder whether "The History of the Children's Newspaper" would be deemed acceptable as a specialist subject on *Mastermind*? Now there's a thought if I am allowed to reapply....

## DOWSING AT THE STONES Paul Slater

**T**he Rollright Stones, on the borders of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, form one of the most notable prehistoric sites in the English Midlands. Associated with a legend of a king and his entourage turned to stone by a witch, they appear at least once in fiction – Penelope Lively's *The Whispering Knight*.

When I visited the Rollright Stones on a recent Bank Holiday weekend, there was a new attraction. The stones had been unattended and free before, but now a custodian sat in a little cabin at the entrance to the King's Men, as the main stone circle of the Rollrights is called. A nominal fee was being charged and a notice advertised dowsing rods for loan. I had never tried to dowse before, but decided to try it now. My wife said that from previous visits she knew there was an earth-spiral in the centre of the King's Men; she'd felt slightly giddy and disorientated when she stood there, as if a mysterious energy were spiralling upwards, and she suggested that I try the dowsing rods at that spot.

The rods were L-shaped wires, the thickness of coathangers, the shorter ends resting in hollow tubes which did not fit closely and so allowed plenty of play. To press a finger

against the rods, or to tilt them downwards so that their weight rested on top of the tubes, was to defeat the object of the exercise; the rods had to be perfectly free to move. At first the rods had so much play that I could not keep them steady, but after some practice I managed to walk across the stone circle holding the rods parallel straight out in front of me without their moving very much.

When I walked across the centre of the King's Men, the rods moved in their tubes, and one of them, to my amazement, began to gyrate briskly. I tried several times, and however carefully I stepped – for the ground in the centre of the circle was a little uneven – I could not keep the rods in position. They swung out of alignment. My wife said that hazel sticks were the traditional instrument for dowsing, but my wires definitely seemed to be registering something. Perhaps an underground spring in the centre of the circle created an electromagnetic field which the metal rods could detect, or perhaps the ability to dowse is more psychic than physical, and for the right person any implement at all would do. It was a mystery, and I knew that I would remember my first experience of dowsing.

## TIME

*Wendy Forrester*

**A** year or two ago there was a lively debate about school history syllabuses. One party was pressing for history to be taught to a point where it is practically current events, one wanted the dust to have time to settle. The latter view is the one which commends itself to me, but I was shaken to discover that what is considered, even by traditionalists, to be decently matured history is to me but yesterday. The late Sixties aren't history, surely – not real, proper history, like the Corn Laws and the Chartists.

My own syllabus – I could cheat and say for O-level, but, tell the truth and shame the devil, it was for School Certificate – was a sensible one. It began with Waterloo and ended with something called the Statute of Westminster, although I don't think we actually reached that, the Corn Laws and the Chartists having taken up so much time. I then counted the years between the Statute of Westminster and the hot summer of the exam in ... well, never mind just when ... and realised that what was dusty antiquity to us at sixteen might have seemed alarmingly recent to our elders.

A funny thing, time. When I was too young even to be troubled with the Statute of Westminster, I read D. M. Stuart's delightful book *A Child's Day Through The Ages*, which begins with the adventure of a Bronze-Age child and finishes with a day in the life of an Edwardian one. When I was ten, little Phyllis in the last chapter seemed almost as remote from me as the Bronze Age, but the years between her childhood and mine are now fewer than those between mine and a present-day ten-year-old. But hers was History, with sailor suits and the cakewalk,

while mine, with ITMA and ration books, was only the other day.

People talk about 'golden oldies' and mean songs from the Sixties, or even – can you believe it? – the Seventies. Anyone knows that a golden oldie is something from one's parents' generation, like 'Spread A Little Happiness' or 'Cheek To Cheek', or, at a pinch, 'The Umbrella Man' or 'South American Way'. Perhaps there really are grown-up people whose parents danced to Beatles music, but it isn't easy to believe.

Time, though, is flexible. The things one lived through remain current events, more or less, while those which occurred before one's birth, or at least before one's conscious memory, are history. This was pleasantly illustrated for me when the BBC was celebrating the 60th anniversary of children's broadcasting. In one of the anniversary programmes on television, the appearance of Uncle Caractacus was announced. Uncle Caractacus! I had, of course, known and loved Uncle Mac on radio Children's Hour, but the fascinating-sounding Uncle Caractacus was before my time. The interviewer might almost as well have announced his historical namesake. Awed, I awaited the advent of a quavering Methuselah. What appeared was a brisk figure, no more than elderly. He must have flourished – what? – five years before I was old enough to listen to Children's Hour? Three? Two? That small slice of time represents for me the huge gap between then and now. Thirty years is still, more or less, now.

If you're my age I shouldn't be surprised if it's the same for you too.

## PISCATORIAL QUIZ ANSWERS *Chris Pelly*

Only two entries (well, better than a **sole** submission), but both of a quality to merit the award of a book token. My thanks to Paul Slater and Dr Gerald MacKenzie, from both of whom I learnt so much.

Gerald was the clear winner with 83% – a splendid effort in view of his having to work from a sickbed. Questions 7, 8, and 16 defeated both contestants. I was impressed (but unmoved) by a veritable cornucopia of specialist knowledge adduced in support of his answers to question 8. General knowledge is my criterion, so I cannot agree that 'medical' is too loose a term, in this context.



### The Answers

1. The Great Cham himself, Dr Samuel Johnson.
2. The River Dove, Derbyshire.
3. ...leviathan... (Job 41.)
4. That esteemed dry-fly "Greenwell's Glory". Canon.
5. A dolphin in New Zealand waters that used to guide ships into and out of port.
6. A "fresh" or "freshet".
7. The tench. "I think this be the most villainous house in all London Road for fleas: I am stung like a tench". (Henry IV Pt 1 Act 2 Scene 1.)
8. It is immune to every known disease, which probably accounts for the fact that, as a species, the shark has not evolved during its three hundred million years of existence. In the early 1960s a series of experiments found that sharks' blood contain antibodies of such devastating virulence that it was hoped that medical research might, paradoxically, be significantly advanced by this most primitive of creatures.
9. Freshwater snails.
10. Both types of fishing reel.
11. A bomb-shaped leger lead with swivel, especially useful when bottom-fishing. (Question pinched from Gerald!!)
12. Pelagic.
13. Wrasse.
14. Turbot. (Juvenal Satires.)
15. Dolly Varden (salmonida malma.) A species of trout indigenous to lakes in the west of N.America.
16. Wet sand liberally slapped on and around the wound. (I can vouch for this remedy.)
17. Zane Grey. New Zealand.
18. Luce.
19. The islands of Bermuda. (See PASS Jan 1993.)
20. There is the risk of Weil's disease from eating fish taken from low water which might contain rats' urine.
21. Hatches of dark fly too small to be imitated by artificial fly, which sometimes swarm on the water and are taken by trout to the exclusion of bait or artificial flies.
22. California.
23. Weever fish (invariably misspelled 'weaver'). Poisonous dorsal spines. From OE 'viper'. The larger version is esteemed on the Continent, where by law dorsal must be removed before sale. However, cooking immediately neutralises the poison. [What about the poisson?!? - CES]
24. A gigantic, man-eating, boat-smashing squid! (A rattling good read, by the way.)
25. The slipper limpet.
26. Tangle of line occasioned by overrun of reel.
27. Because according to folklore a freshly-caught grayling smells faintly of thyme.
28. Greenheart.
29. Herling.
30. Flax line for sea fishing, now mostly superseded by synthetic material.

**WHERE ARE YOU NOW***Lance Haward*

I'm obsessed. I dictated a memorandum to the typist – a stolid, lawyer's memorandum. It pertained to musical instruments. The heading I dictated was 'Music Education'. The memorandum came back with the heading duly typed. In front of the words 'Music Education' it read: 'Miss Fishpool'.

I have neither met, heard of, nor ever surmised Miss Fishpool. Never could I have conceived of such a person (nor, in the circumstances, she of me!). It is not a name that in my wildest literary concoction I'd attach to the most unstable of female characters flouting lipstick and bangles as she tangoes the afternoon away. But knowing how stubbornly non-inventive these particular typists are, never for an instant engaging themselves in the meaning of what they type (for fear of headlong immersion in some black legal necromancy) I still can't believe that she's a figment of whatever imagination their daily staring at a poster of the Chippendales leaves vacant. They've not offered me this flighty creature from any other compulsion than that of a voice as arresting and external as the one that transmogrified Saul into Paul halfway to Damascus.

Somewhere out in that dangerous ether, hungry to find a chink in the armour of Reality, the sponsors of Miss Fishpool are lurking, be warned. More powerful than ordinary in-laws, they are ready to promote a new relationship for her with any prospect careless enough to leave his electronic gadgetry hanging open. I have solicited Miss Fishpool, in all her ostentatious slingbacks, clocked nylons and diamanté cigarette holder, as surely as if I'd left the Ansaphone switched on, or gone out into Shepherd Market (or wherever the action is these days) with a clutch of twenty-pound notes sprouting in my hand like a strawberry cornet. And what's more, Miss Fishpool assuredly has her eyes set on me. If it were not so, she would hardly have wriggled herself into a context so alien to her natural inclinations as a serious analysis of the sober topic of legal title to jointly used bassoons.

I suspect that her first name is Lois. It is, indeed, a ninety-seven percent certainty. This giddy young creature is no sophisticated Harriet or Rebecca; had she been that solemn, she would not have been a Fishpool in the first place, not one of your Eastbourne Fishpools, but a Smithson from (of course) Basingstoke. She would have been heavily into V.S.O.

So, where from here? If I play with the ouija board, can I expect her to get in touch again, with an assignation for Wimbledon or tea at the Ritz? One day, if I don't call a halt to the surreptitious affair right now, she's sure to turn up at the proverbially inauspicious moment, probably during the Vicar's sermon, sitting conspicuously halfway up the aisle on the end seat and casting none-too-covert backward glances in my direction; or on speech day at my daughter's school, unsuitably dressed. She won't be making melody any longer.

After that, it's a short run to a Glenn Close job with the breadknife. I should never have let myself get involved with music education. It's something to do with the more obscure harmonies of the bassoon.

## TOWN TOURS QUIZ

*Michael Davison*

A copy of the Reader's Digest *Town Tours in Britain* awaits the first correct, or nearest correct, set of answers opened on 13th January by:

**Michael Davison**

***In which British town can you see...***

1. The theatre that staged the 1892 premiere of *Charley's Aunt*?
2. A gravestone to a woman killed by a 'tyger fierce' and a memorial window to a monk who tried to fly?
3. Alleyways called (i) 'Twittens' (ii) 'Rows' (iii) 'Closes' and (iv) 'Ghauts'?
4. Public buildings popularly known as 'Education, Salvation and Damnation'?
5. Britain's last tide-operated mill?
6. (i) The bullet that killed Nelson? (ii) The uniform he was wearing at the time?
7. A Boulevard de Nantes that runs into a Stuttgart Strasse?
8. (i) A pirlie pig? (ii) a dirling pin? (iii) 'The Puggie'? (iv) 'Paddy's Wigwam'?
9. The course over which in 1829 the first Oxford and Cambridge boat race was rowed?
10. A civic library with a troop of stone monkeys glaring down from its roof?
11. A cinema whose foyer is a 15thC. wool merchant's house?

***Which British towns do the following headlines describe?***

- A. Boomerangs and golf balls fly in an old seaside town gathered around a 13thC. cathedral, near the spot where Scotland's last witch was buried.
- B. A town at the edge of the Peak District offers pure spring water, homemade gingerbread and an annual outbreak of football mayhem.
- C. A market town that climbs from the banks of the River Eye is famous for pork pies, cheese – and the foxhunters who once 'painted the town red'?
- D. A swan is the emblem for an ancient town that boasts a Cromwell Room and a legendary baby saint who preached a sermon on virtuous living.
- E. In a town of bright Georgian houses, Robert Burns wrote the grace now recited at Burns Night suppers, and John Paul Jones was once imprisoned.
- F. One of England's largest market squares opens out near an exuberant Victorian guildhall – and a museum displaying an elephant's boot.
- G. A cathedral city in the Dales is watched over by its own St. Wilfrid, while a Bellman opens its market, and Hornblower puts it resoundingly to bed.

