

# PASS

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE MASTERMIND CLUB



WINTER 2000

Wedding of the Year  
Master Quiz Round 2  
More Millennium Madness

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### *Peter Chitty*

I HOPE THAT EVERYONE HAD A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS and enjoyed the new millennium celebrations.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you that *Mastermind* has survived into the new millennium, there is to be another series on Radio 4 and auditions are under way as I write this.

Thanks to all those members who have sent me their email addresses. I am sure that there are more out there, so please keep them coming. I shall issue an updated list of email addresses with the next edition of PASS, together with your new membership card.

When using the list, remember that STD codes and numbers for many areas change in April. These will be incorporated in the next full list when it is issued next year.

I look forward to seeing you in Carlisle in April.

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# PASS

WINTER 2000

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## PASS NOTES

*Craig Scott, Editor*

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS to Keith and Marga Scott on their wedding, the second Scott wedding in the Club this year, as Marga points out in our feature on pages 4 and 5.

This issue is being assembled during an all-too-brief breather between contracts. After working full-tilt from November through to January, we were looking forward to a couple of weeks free to catch up on the rest of our lives. Like, we now have a revamped super-turbo shower after a month without.

Some genealogical leads from a cousin in California sent us off to Suffolk last week in search of an ancestor who was one of the first settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, just a decade after the Pilgrim Fathers landed. He came from Nayland, still seemingly much as he left it, a couple of miles up the River Stour from Constable's East Bergholt and Flatford. When we got back, the quest continued with a happy day in the British Library.

Yesterday, we were interrupted by banging from across the alley, where our neighbour was demolishing a rather unprepossessing shed. This was interesting to us, as his cottage is one of the oldest buildings remaining in Cox Green. It turns out the green corrugated sheeting was hung on a frame of 18<sup>th</sup>-Century oak beams which were part of an old thatched barn (we popped out with the camera to record it before it was all torn down), and he's found traces of an flint foundation which he figures is much older even than the cottage which stands on it.

### *Sports desk*

WELL, THE RAMS, my team when I was a wee, finally won the Super Bowl. Trouble is, they haven't represented Los Angeles since they decamped to St. Louis five years ago (rather like Manchester United moving to Barnsley). Even the Raiders returned to Oakland after a stay of only a few

years (rather like Leeds United moving to Manchester and then moving back). The gallant losers to the Rams, the Tennessee Titans, were the Houston Oilers a scant season or two ago, making this the first Super Bowl to be contested by two transplants.

### *Contact note*

WE'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE with receiving and storing email for our CompuServe address. So, pending reorganisation of our electronic presence, please direct all email to .

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# LETTERS, NEWS AND VIEWS

## **From Ray Ward**

I WAS GREATLY HONOURED last year to be asked to become Chairman of the South London Quiz League. Many Club members play in the League and all the regulars in my own team are members.

A few comments on the Autumn issue of PASS:

There is so much overlap between Mensa and the Club that I sometimes get confused about whether I'm at a Club or Mensa event! I once went through the membership list and picked out about a dozen I knew were Mensans (though I've known some Club members for some time before finding they were also Mensans). Glenys Hopkins, much more diligently, compared the membership list with the Mensa Yearbook and found 37 (PASS, Summer 1999).

I have been in Mensa nearly 27 years and am writing this after attending the funeral of its President, Victor Serebriakoff, who rescued it when it was virtually dead and built it up to an international organisation of over 100,000. Many spoke of what Mensa meant to them. For myself, not particularly sociable or gregarious, I often wonder what life would have been like without Mensa, through which I have made many of my best friendships and close relationships.

Andrew Grealey (p.2) should not take too much notice of the press. The old rule that things seen in the media of which one has personal knowledge are usually wrong is never more clearly demonstrated than by what is said about Mensa. The Club has had experience of journalists saying what they like heedless of the truth with Robert Crampton's article about the 1996 Annual Function in *The Times Magazine*. As Magnus says in *I've Started, So I'll Finish*, "like so many journalists, he went there with a preconceived stereotype of Masterminders as something they have never claimed to be – and then proceeded to shoot it down." Substitute 'Mensans' for 'Masterminders' and you have an exact description of much said about Mensa.

The leadership's views are anyway irrelevant, since Mensa's most important precept – which Victor laid down after the founder alienated members by implying to the press that his often eccentric views were generally accepted by members – is that Mensa has no corporate views, that nothing is ever expressed as the opinion of Mensa as a body, and that nothing said by any Mensan should be taken as anything but that member's personal view.

Barbara-Anne Eddy's piece (p. 6) was the second mention of Las Vegas I've seen recently. A former colleague married her long-time partner there with the full vulgar monty – wedding chapel, Elvis impersonator. I was there in 1973, and recall the very ordinary-looking centre (look, Woolworths!), The Strip surprisingly being outside the city itself in the desert, wedding chapels outlined in pink neon with shuddersome names like 'The Wee Kirk O' The Heather and The Old Hitching Post, and – Barbara-Anne's father's experience reminded me – the women on The Strip who asked my friend John and me if we'd like to go to a party. I divined their nature immediately but John went up to them – and retreated hastily when the penny dropped. It is indeed the fast-growing city in the US and is no doubt very different now.

## **Mastermind crosses the pond**

FOR ALL THOSE AWAITING THE REBIRTH of TV *Mastermind*, the most immediate solution may be to move to the United States. Many of you will have seen the item in *The Times* of 11 January to the effect that the ABC network is following up the success of its version of *Who wants to be a Millionaire?* (leading the ratings with 33.7 million viewers) with an American *Mastermind* from the same producer. The host is liable to be Phil Donohue, and the champion's prize of a Caithness glass bowl will give way to a large cheque (check?). Producer Michael Davies, a Brit, said he "realised there's room out there for a show where instead of saying 'Oh my God, these questions are so easy', you say, 'What planet are these guys from?'"

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2000

Notice is hereby given that the twenty-second Annual General Meeting of the Mastermind Club will be held at the Crown & Mitre Hotel, Carlisle, on Sunday 16 April 2000 at 1100hrs.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> AGM, Oxford, 18 April 1999 (published in PASS, Spring 1999)
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report
5. Appointment of Auditor
6. PASS
7. Election of Club Charity for 2000–2001
8. President's Report
9. Membership Secretary's Report
10. Insignia
11. Annual Functions 2000 and 2001
12. Election of Club Committee for 2000–2001\*
13. Magnum Competition
14. Mugnum Competition
15. Any other business

\***Note to item 12:** All Committee posts fall due for re-election at this AGM. Committee members are elected to serve for a period of two years. Any Club member in good standing is welcome to nominate himself or herself, and may do so by writing to the Secretary. Proposers and seconders are not required. The last date for receipt of nominations is Monday 27 March 2000.

**Tony Dart, President**

**Gavin Fuller, Secretary**

**24th January 2000**

## ***Booking for the Function***

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED that booking forms and information for the Carlisle event were included with the last issue of PASS.

## CLUB SHOPPING

PLENTY of new merchandise is now available:

- ❖ Rugby shirts have the club logo in black on burgundy or Kelly green.
- ❖ Multi-logo ties come in maroon or royal blue.
- ❖ Tie clips and stick pins are back, enamelled with the club logo in black.

All prices include postage and packing. Send a cheque with your order, payable to the Mastermind Club, to Patricia Owen.

TIES	£
<i>NEW!</i> MAROON (MULTI-LOGO)	7.00
<i>NEW!</i> ROYAL BLUE (MULTI-LOGO)	7.00
SILVER (SINGLE-LOGO)	6.00
<b>RUGBY SHIRTS</b>	
<i>NEW!</i> BURGUNDY, KELLY GREEN (M, L, XL)	18.00
<i>NEW!</i> BURGUNDY, KELLY GREEN (XXL)	20.00
<b>SWEATSHIRTS</b>	
OATMEAL (M, L, XL)	15.00
RED (M, L, XL)	15.00
<b>JEWELLERY</b>	
KEY RINGS	5.00
PENDANTS	5.00
<i>NEW!</i> TIE CLIPS	7.00
<i>NEW!</i> STICK PINS	6.00

# THE WEDDING OF THE YEAR

*Reports from the bride and one of the guests*

## *From Marga Scott*

THE YEAR 1999 WAS A SPECIAL YEAR in more than one respect. Not only did it see a royal wedding and the completion of the Millennium Dome, but – more importantly – it also marked the creation of two new Mrs. Scotts within the Mastermind Club. After Craig and Sarah had tied the knot in Hawaii in the spring, Keith and I celebrated our nuptials in St. Cuthbert's Church at Marton-in-Cleveland on 18 December.

As most of you know, Keith and I found each other through the Mastermind Club, so it went without saying that our wedding was graced by the presence of a sizeable Club delegation, among whom were two former champions. In addition, this wedding marked a reunion of the contestants from Keith's first round in 1987: although Keith had kept in touch with Jean Burke, Jim Hollingsworth and Stewart Cross, this was the first time since 1987 that all four of them were together again!

ALL IN ALL we had a truly wonderful day, which was a perfect blend of English and Dutch wedding traditions. It was lovely to share this special day with so many of our relatives and friends, who sometimes had travelled great distances to be there. After an equally marvellous honeymoon to Durham and Edinburgh (thanks also to Norman and Joyce Izzet, with whom we spent a very enjoyable afternoon and evening in Edinburgh), we are now in the process of moving to Rothbury in Northumberland. Once we have settled in, we hope that many Masterminders will come and see us there. In any case we look forward to seeing you in Carlisle.



**From Gavin Fuller**

DECEMBER 1999 WILL GO INTO THE ANNALS of club history as the first time two members of the club married each other. It was at the Dublin AGM that Club Auditor Keith Scott (1987 & 1995) met Marga Munniksma (*Megabrein* 1993); 19 months later 20 members of the club congregated in Marton-in-Cleveland, birthplace of Captain Cook, to witness a happy occasion. Base of operations was the Marton Hotel and Country Club, venue for the reception and home for the weekend for most of the attendees, in particular the bar! Keith and Marga had had a civil wedding by the time the guests had arrived, thus it was quite safe for them to be seen together the night before the service, when they very kindly descended upon us all. The next morning dawned bright if rather chilly, and the venue for the service of blessing, St Cuthbert's Church, looked resplendent in the morning sun. A good congregation assembled, with the Mastermind Club contingent cunningly positioned in cross-benches at the rear of the church, so we could be seen equally supporting bride and groom. Marga looked radiant in her bridal dress as she entered the church, and a lovely service followed, though whether the Mastermind choir could be recommended for future occasions is a moot point!

After the customary photos it was back to the hotel, though the bride and groom mysteriously disappeared for

a while before manifesting themselves at the hotel. The reception was entertaining; Marga's friends produced a video of various Dutch people wishing them well, which proved fun if a bit confusing at times; particularly memorable was one well-wisher being drowned out by low-flying aircraft! Keith's brother, Andy gave a memorable speech as best man, including a quiz for Keith who fared moderately well and gave great entertainment for the rest of us. A particularly nice touch was the book passed round for all guests to sign and write a message to the happy couple. The wedding was also notable for reuniting all Keith's fellow contenders in his heat at Hexham in 1987 for the first time since, so a commemorative photo ensued. As the happy couple left for a honeymoon in Durham (followed by Edinburgh) it was snowing outside, adding a festive touch. For most of the rest of us, a convivial evening in the bar, with the hotel very kindly providing complimentary sandwiches, ensued. A memorable day, and weekend for many of us, and the Club wishes Keith and Marga every happiness in the years ahead; two more deserving people it would be hard to find.



# MORE MILLENNIUM VIEWS

## *The latest (and last) instalment of the debate*

### ***First of all...from Alison Kelly***

IN PUBLISHING MY REPLY to Lance Haward's article, you mysteriously gave my name as Anne Kelly. As I write quite frequently under my correct name, I should be glad if you would correct the mistake in the next issue.

*I am pleased to set the record straight. Apologies to Alison; also to the real Anne Kelly, who was understandably baffled when I told her I was using 'her' article – Ed. of little brain.*

### ***From Gordon Stuart***

I AM AFRAID ALISON KELLY is arguing from a false premise.

At no time in a child's life does the year 0 occur. At birth the child enters upon his first year of life, but of course he is not one year old until the end of that year. Similarly a person does not become a centenarian until the end of his hundredth year, not on the first day of it.

The first century A.D., even though it was not designated at the time because Christianity was not then an official religion, ran from 1 to 100. The 20<sup>th</sup> century thus runs from 1901 to 2000. Consequently, although this is (and can be celebrated as) the millennium year, the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium do not begin until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001.

This is not only logical, but it was agreed by the international conference on the standardisation of time which adopted the meridian of Greenwich as the basis of international time.

### ***From Lance Haward***

DID I NOT PROPHECY that there was confusion in store for us? But I think we can readily resist Alison Kelly's strenuous attempt to add to it.

I suggest that anyone who seriously believes that "most people", whether "instinctively" or otherwise, customarily count to a hundred by a system that stops at 99 is indeed one number short of a full century. Even from the ranks of those who are under the impression that 'billion' means

a thousand million (a belief categorized as alien by the Oxford English Dictionary – the word for that is, of course, as any educated person is aware, a 'milliard') I have yet to hear anyone advance the self-evidently preposterous idea that 'hundred' ('century' – legionaries, runs, years, whatever) means anything other than 'hundred'.

I suggest rather that what most people recognize, and apparently have little difficulty recognizing except when Millennial madness overtakes them, is that the Twentieth Century culminates with the number 20. The notion of a century, Twentieth or any other, that does not contain its relevant denominating number is, to say the least, a pretty bizarre one, which if allowed to go wandering off on its own can only end up spreading its infection into brains already over-taxed by simple arithmetic. (A good secondary demonstration, incidentally, of the truth that decimal systems are harder for people to handle than a natural duodecimal one!)

The fact that the Twentieth Century is defined by the number 20 is so totally straightforward that it's beyond belief that anybody should have difficulty grasping it, or get into a hopeless tangle in trying to circumvent it. (If they followed their *instincts*, most people would probably take the Twentieth Century to comprise *everything* starting with a 20!)

The circumstance that during the first year of one's life (anyone's life) one is not yet one year old is no more a 'mistake' in ordinary parlance than in Christology. This is to see a problem where none exists. That Christ, had He been born during the first year of the Christian era (which, of course, He was not) would not have celebrated His first birthday until the second year of His era is not problematical, any more than that everyone else's first birthday occurs at the outset of his or her second year

Look. At the time when Dionysius propounded the present chronology (two centuries *after* the official

recognition of Christianity by Constantine, as it happens) the year was taken to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. When, subsequently, the observance of the Nativity as the 25<sup>th</sup> of December was instituted, the start of the year was shifted, for obvious reasons, to the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, with the introduction of the Feast of the Annunciation.

In other words, what Dionysius no doubt had in mind was the tacit proposition that Christ was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. With the introduction of a standardized Nativity and consequent transfer of New Year's Day from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> (retrospective, certainly, but no more so than the chronology itself) the system remained coherent in the light of the common medieval computation that life began with conception rather than nativity. It was the Gregorian calendar that, in shunting the start of the year back to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January (a reversion to the *civil* practice first introduced in 143 B.C.) produced what Alison regards as an anomaly. Until then, no discrepancy between the count of years and the putative life-span of Christ would have been apparent: the Birth was considered to have taken place on the first day of the Era. Presumably the consequence, if any, of that today would be that the Second Millennium from the Birth of Christ, had it indeed taken place on that date and in that year, would not now expire until next Christmas. For what little that now wholly academic thought may be worth.

For present purposes, which have nothing whatever to do with the Life of Christ, now known to have begun four years or more prior to the date assigned by Dionysius, all that is in issue is, I repeat, the ability to count up to a hundred. To be precise, or as precise as the record allows – the Christian Era is not *ahead*, but some half-dozen years *behind*, the Life which it commemorates!

And when I say that most people recognize this simple truth, I am merely recording that everyone who responds to commentary such as that which I offered last time

invariably admits that the mathematics are unarguable, and that he or she is simply proposing to commemorate the arrival of a round number on the calendar because 'everybody else' has decided to do so! Apart from herd-mentality being a very bad reason for supposedly intelligent beings to do anything, there are plenty of others out here with me who have no intention whatever of doing something so totally inane.

The only people whose celebration will be based on any solid reality will be the scores of dealers who are busily marketing everything from fireworks to party tickets at inflated prices to the ignorant masses, and who in three days' time will be raking in a rich harvest of human gullibility – to which I earnestly trust none of you is credulous enough to be contributing!

### ***From Michael Grosvenor Myer***

TWO LETTERS IN THE AUTUMN 1999 issue perpetuate the dispute about when millennia, centuries, etc., begin. Richard Sturch's final parenthesis claims the 20<sup>th</sup> century to have begun on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1901, while Alison Kelly cogently argues for the 00s being what count – and also for the emotional argument, just as important as the arithmetical, that 1900 (say) is a much more obliging date than 1901, as is 2000 for the millennium than 2001. Might I make the additional point that these eras are *semantic* just as much as they are mathematical, as a friend admitted nearly ten years ago when I met her in the village shop early in January 1990 and wished her a happy new decade. "Oh, no," she said, "not for another year." "Arithmetically yes," I agreed, "but, semantically, you can't deny that three days ago we were in the eighties, and now we're in the nineties." As with decades, so with centuries, and even millennia: I write this in the one thousands; should you include it in the next PASS, we shall be in the two thousands when it appears. Get round that, all you numerical pedants. Long live the linguists, I cry.

# THOUGHTS ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

*...and Wendy Forrester considers a related question*

OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS some of us have been wondering how we shall eventually refer to the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some people scorn references to “The Twenties”, “The Thirties” and so on, claiming them to be purely artificial distinctions. Possibly they are, but it is hard for me not to feel that decades really do have individual flavours, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at least; I have not found much indication of this in the 19<sup>th</sup> until the Naughty Nineties. (Out of habit I first wrote “the last century”, meaning what is now the last but one.)

The first ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century neatly avoid the problem of nomenclature by being “The Edwardian Age”. George V arrived with double figures, but the period seems to feel Edwardian until the outbreak of World War I. The “teens” are mostly wartime and the immediate postwar years, after which we get the decades with strong individual characters. First the Roaring Twenties, the Charleston, flappers, strap shoes, shingles, silent films, and the Wall Street Crash ushering in the Thirties in 1929. The Thirties – the Depression, Fred Astaire, dance bands, slinky satin dresses, cocktails, Art Deco, those seaside posters, and the outbreak of World War II, which marked the start of the Forties.

When one thinks of the Forties it is the first half of the decade which remains in the consciousness; Dunkirk, Churchill, the Battle of Britain, gas masks, Itma, rather than the second half, when politics was important and polarised in a way it was not until the 1980s. And in the Eighties only one name resonated, *thatchersbritain* being used by the liberal establishment like the “damnyankee” of the southerner’s joke, while in the late Forties the names of half-a-dozen cabinet ministers were common on the lips of mainstream comedians in a way they have never been since. (Actually probably all comedians were mainstream then.) The Forties ended in 1951, with a change of government, and then began the decade which is now a

Cinderella. Perhaps this is because the present movers and shapers of fashion grew up in the Sixties, a decade they have never ceased to mourn. Grey, the Fifties were, they say, boring, stuffy, repressed. Some of us who grew up then would say differently. The Fifties marked the end of rationing, the reappearance of coloured china, scent, and lighted shop windows, the appearance of nylon stockings (nylons became a synonym for stockings themselves), Italian Pink lipstick, the young Queen, the young Princess Margaret.

Then the Sixties. Everyone has written about them, so I hardly need to.

The Seventies were a strange decade. On the personal level I enjoyed them, but politically they were dire. There was a sense of sleepwalking about them, as if nothing which happened was going to stir the populace to do more than sigh. I suppose people who were growing up then know all about the music and drama of the time, but I remember little of it, and not much about fashion, except a trend for long cotton dresses worn for quite informal occasions. I had a couple myself, although I worried a little in case people thought they were too young for me.

I can’t be sure when the Seventies, spiritually, began, but of course they ended tidily in 1979, with a change of government. The Eighties, apart from being *thatchersbritain*, were shoulder pads and red braces and the Seventies put into reverse, ending with the fall of Mrs. Thatcher in 1990.

The Nineties? I don’t know whether they have spiritually ended yet or not, nor how to classify them. Ahead of us lie the – what shall we call them? In the 19<sup>th</sup> century they seem to have talked about “The Year Four”, “The Year Six”, and so on, but I don’t know what they called their first decade, or whether they called it anything. Perhaps they didn’t. Perhaps we shan’t. Sooner or later we shall find out, I suppose.

# ECLIPSE

*...while Paul Slater reports on another much-heralded event*

WE ALIGHTED AT A JUNCTION OF LANES where it was easy to turn the car round. Our driver went back to the house to pick up the rest of the party, and my wife and I with our friends' two children set off up the path. We had passed a number of cars and groups of pedestrians lower down, and now there was a steady stream of people making their way up the hill.

The beautiful clear sunny weather of the previous evening had, as the forecasters had warned us, given way to cloud. A shaft of sunlight through the bedroom window earlier had given me hope, but now the sky was overcast, with a hint of rain in the air. This was the day of the total eclipse. After all the expectation and planning and waiting, the hyperbole, the dire warnings of chaos, the conflicting advice on how to avoid damage to our eyes, it was a dull, damp morning here in the far south-west. It was impossible not to feel disappointed, but there was nevertheless an unmistakable excitement in the gathering crowd, a sense of anticipation. There was something of a festival in the hundreds of people gathering on the hilltop, and something, too, of a pilgrimage. We were congregating to witness a spectacular natural event, and if it was to be an anti-climax, then still we wanted to be here together to experience the thing that had been talked about so much for so long.

At the top of the hill we waited for the rest of the party. Rain began to fall. My wife urged me to work hard. So often on our excursions threatened rain holds off, it had become a joke that I have power over the weather. If I could make the clouds lift this morning, said my wife, then my reputation as a weather-worker would be unassailable. I thought hard, and the rain did indeed ease off. In my pocket I had a pinhole projector and four pairs of special eclipse glasses; I had checked them this morning for scratches and had held them up against a lamp. I had marked the two through which I could faintly see the lamp as being for adults, leaving the more opaque two for the children. It was all unnecessary, I was sure; we would not see the sun this morning.

The rest of the party joined us, and we moved on, to the south-eastern edge of the hill. From here we could see both the north and south coasts of Cornwall. There were

crowds of people here too, expectant. The cloud cover grew heavier, but the rain held off. The time of the eclipse approached, and the landscape became gloomy. A patch of thinner cloud meant that a hill away to the north-east seemed to be in sunlight. Floodlights at a factory down below, and the flashing lights on a tall television mast on a nearby hill, shone more brightly.

My wife said that it was definitely getting darker. The clouds hung ominously black against a grey sky. Then, with a suddenness that took me by surprise, the world went from storm-dark to dusk-dark and then to night-dark. I cried out with awe and amazement, and my wife, thinking I was afraid, took my hand; and perhaps there really was a hint of a primeval terror in the sudden unnatural nighttime less than an hour before noon. Street-lamps came on in the villages below, and some, not yet warmed up, shone blood-red, adding a further eeriness to the scene. Cameras flashed, and someone nearby lit candles, which glowed brightly in the darkness. More cameras flashed away on the hill to the northeast.

FOR TWO MINUTES THE WORLD WAS DARK, the landscape turned to night. People on the edge of the hill nearby stood out in dim silhouette against a line of faint pinkish-gold light along the horizon. I stood full of wonder. My wife thought of the gospel account of the sky turning dark when Jesus was crucified; she thought, too, of how prehistoric man must have been amazed and aghast at a total eclipse, and of how something of that awe could still be felt by modern people.

Suddenly, the sky above the hill lightened, the spectators more easily visible. A cheer arose, and in seconds the light returned and eclipse-night became a dull summer day once more. Full of emotion, we joined the slow trek of people down the hill. On the long walk back into the town, drizzle fell steadily, but I made no attempt to will it away, my mind was still full of the weird darkness I had witnessed at the summit. I had not realised that, even obscured by cloud, the eclipse would be so impressive. Another total eclipse in this country is not due for nearly a hundred years, and as I have no intention of going abroad in search of them, I am certain that I shall never see one again.

# MASTER QUIZ 2000 ROUND 2

## *Gerald introduces his twentieth set of Master Quiz questions with a little history*

AFTER THE EUPHORIA of the founding of the Club and the extravaganza of the Café Royal we had two AGMs at the Television Centre in August 1979 and September 1980. In those early days Bill Wright, besides hosting the AGMs and providing a lavish buffet, supported the Club with £200 p.a. towards postage and PASS.

At the 1980 AGM it was decided to expand the AGM into a weekend function with a dinner, followed most suitably by the finals of a Quiz, featuring the leading competitors from a postal quiz in PASS. This was to keep an interest going between AGMs and provide a goal and focus at the AGM weekend. In default of any other volunteers, I rashly assumed the task of providing, devising the format and setting the questions. The quiz committee formed according to the best bureaucratic practice was stillborn as it left the meeting. I never heard of or from them again and soon realised it had to be me or nothing – not easy, as I was in my third and final year of a non-stipendary ministry, theology and ordinand's course.

Although the title Master Quiz had been used for a small quiz by the first editor of PASS, Martin Leadbetter, and prior to this by my son Alasdair's Classics Master from 1956, I decided to keep it. The title of Magnus for the Finals came later with the Toby Jug in Magnus' likeness and by the participation of Magnus himself. However, the elaborate plans for the 1981 AGM weekend ended in a fiasco: postponed and ultimately abandoned without information, warning or explanation. Magnus and I were left in limbo and others, one of whom actually turned up.

Kathryn Jones got her trophy in 1982 when Magnus desisted and I being an amateur didn't use cards. By 1983, sharpened by the bringing forward of the *Mastermind* programme, Magnus and I began to polish our act.

The controversial division of the answers to the preliminary rounds into two entries – U for Unseen and R for Reference – was a naïve attempt to capitalise on members' natural curiosity. Unsurprisingly, two very clear-cut conclusions emerged. The most obvious was that the best competitors were also the best researchers – how else had they gained their knowledge? Secondly, that the Reference round did not materially alter the composition of the Finals' list of qualifiers. I consider that this is due to some extent to an alteration in the style and content of the questions more recently. Since Phillida started setting Round 1, the questions set for Round 2 have been intended for spontaneous answering and are varied perhaps with the esoteric and/or difficult to research. Previously the Research component was encouraged and allowed for.

The problem with competitors with the skill and experience of such as Kevin Ashman is the constant temptation to write for or against them, but they have influenced me, unavoidably. Peter Richardson and I have had many entertaining tussles in the past and, having examined him thoroughly, I have to say that at his best he was probably the world's best. Kathryn Johnson *née* Jones has kept up a remarkable standard of performance; she and Peter have always provided the standard by which all

others are judged. Undoubtedly we can now field a team of finalists who would beat any and all comers, and there is a very strong supporting cast, many of whom can challenge any of them – Isabel Heward, for example.

AFTER TWENTY YEARS I HAVE DECIDED TO COMBINE the *U* and *R* entries, requesting competitors to indicate that portion of their answers, if appropriate, provided by reference and to quote the aforesaid reference.

Finally, the mechanics of the Quiz: the preliminary round questions as I have often stated are by free association and used to be in groups, but now come as they will. I usually write about 200 per round and then select.

The finals are different. Questions have to be evened out in subject and difficulty, into triplets and doublets and tiebreakers. I write and present for Magnus' approval beforehand about 300 questions, which we whittle down by post, those chosen for final consideration are checked and printed onto cards. I bring about 200 cards plus about 100 unused in previous Magnums. Magnus and I then spend about three hours polishing our act, checking and setting the scene, just finishing in time to change for dinner and, sometimes, we get quite worked up over it all, but consummate professional that Magnus is, he is usually right and I 'reckon' considering the Magnum is the production of a man and boy, we do as well or better than many a TV recording with all its ancillary staff and retakes. Twenty-six years ago Magnus and I had a very acrimonious encounter but we have become great and family friends. Perhaps it is that we partly share a Norse heritage and quite probably DNA and we both did something unusual,

educationally, for Scotland by going straight from school to Oxbridge and to the respective Jesus Colleges.

As Magnus dedicated his book to Bill Wright, I dedicate this Quiz to the fortunately flourishing Mamie and Magnus!

### ***Instructions***

Please write your answers on single sheets indicating any material gained from research and naming the source. 80% of the marks are available for fully answered questions and 20% for bonuses for excellence.

### ***Deadline***

All entries must have been received by **3 April 2000**. *Exceptions* may be made, but I must be notified by telephone before this date with suitable reasons!

### ***Availability***

All entrants should indicate on their entries details of their whereabouts for the period April 5–12, so that I can contact them should they be successful qualifiers for the Magnum.

# MASTER QUIZ 2000 ROUND 2 QUESTIONS

## MMs

1. Who gave St. Magnus the 'coup de grace'?
2. Who is the club's patron?
3. What *magna opera* is he concurrently engaged upon?
4. What singular astronomical/constructional property is displayed and shared by the Chambered Cairns of Maes Howe and New Grange and not shared by the Tholos tombs of Mycenae?
5. On which Orcadian Island is Mid Howe a large, if not the largest, burial tumulus in Europe?
6. With which Hebridean islanders do the people of Iceland share their DNA in equal (50%) proportions, confirming the historical and saga records that this island was a base or stepping-stone for Iceland's colonisers?
7. Where was the petty kingdom of Dalriada?
8. Which English (Anglo-Norman) knight was Robert de Bruis' first victim the day before Bannockburn in 1314? (For a bonus, in which church is there a brass plaque to his memory?)
9. Who was slain (stabbed) by whom before the altar of Devorgilla Balliol's Friary at Dumfries in 1306?
10. From which Belgrade football supporters club did its president recruit hooligans for his Tigers?
11. Which AFC did the late General Arkan own?
12. Which other president's wife also had a famous football supporters club?
13. And who is the late president's lady famous for her collection of shoes?

## Intro and subheading

IN THE LATE 1940S, the following were frequent occupants of the smoking room of the National Liberal Club: Neville Cardus, Richard Dimbleby, David Low, Viscount Simon and Jeremy Thorpe: all fated to be subjects of my quiz!

14. What electoral catastrophe befell the Liberal Party in 1950?
15. What were Neville Cardus' ruling and journalistic passions?
16. Which 'provincial' newspaper was owned by David Dimbleby?
17. What was the subject of Richard Dimbleby's last TV appearance on April Fool's Day?
18. How did David Low depict the TUC (shades of *Animal Farm*) and himself in his cartoons?
19. His support for a future Conservative Prime Minister cost Viscount Simon his membership of the National Liberal Club: which one?
20. What was the amount of the financial link between Jeremy Thorpe (MP) and the sponsor of the recovery of the SS Great Britain? Please elucidate.
21. What was the name of the dog in whose memory Auberon Waugh founded the Dog Lovers' Party to oppose Jeremy Thorpe in North Devon at the 1979 General Election?
22. Who now represents Sir Leon Brittan's parliamentary constituency?
23. What was William Wallace's method of execution of the chatelaines of captured castles? Refer to the late Nigel Tranter.
24. Why did St. Vladimir choose the Orthodox Church for his state (Kiev) religion a millennium ago?!!
25. When does the Greek Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas?
26. Who has written *Women at the Altar* and taught at St. Mary's School, Ascot?
27. Which saint was most famously tormented by lascivious ladies, etc. in his cell?
28. A truly good man, what *nom de guerre* was given to the Rev. Donald Caskie, helper of distressed elderly Britons, Allied escaped POWs and imprisoned Nazi victims? Minister of the Scots Kirk in Paris, he avoided execution through the offices of a German padre.
29. Which WWII organisation was controlled by Col. Maurice Buckmaster?
30. Which wartime (WWII) heroine, starved and tortured, arrested and surrendered the Commandant of Ravensbruck concentration camp to an astonished US Army Patrol in May 1945? Hardly surprising as she was emaciated, without toe or fingernails, scarred, wild-haired and torn-dressed.
31. Whose last words were "Patriotism is not enough"?
32. Who said "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel"?
33. Why is the head of MI6 called 'C'?
34. Which author has removed mention of the Holocaust from the second edition of his book *Hitler's War*, as he considers disposal of over 100,000 tons of bodies would have been impossible?
35. Who was German Foreign Minister in 1914?
36. Where, according to the popular wartime song, were we going to hang out our washing?
37. For which form of enlightenment would you consult Groves Dictionary?
38. Which composer was unsuccessful with his application for the post of music master at Cheltenham Ladies College? His letter is still extant. His daughter Imogen was until recently at Dartington Hall.
39. What were 'Bing' Crosby's Christian names?
40. What was the name of the Beatles' original record label?
41. What is the appropriate sticker to put on your car's trailer if you wish to exceed 30 mph?
42. By which railway company might we travel from Exeter to Carlisle?
43. With apologies to Christopher Hughes, where in the British Railway System could you place Mackintoshes' Corkscrew?
44. Which railway gradient on the line between Cheltenham and Birmingham needed the services of the exceptionally powerful banker Big Bertha?
45. What epoch-making railway journey took place at Pendarren Colliery prior to Rainhill?
46. What is the present name of the old North British Hotel at the Waverley Station in Edinburgh?
47. Why and when did the LNER introduce the Silverlink between London and Edinburgh? What was special about it?

48. From which Edinburgh physician did Conan Doyle get his inspiration for Sherlock Holmes?
49. What was the ultimate fate and disposal of the 'Mad Axeman' Frank Mitchell?
50. Which pre-war Scottish Jam manufacturer funded and participated in extensive archaeological 'digs' e.g. Windmill Hill?
51. Famously known as Rick, who directed the excavations at Maiden Castle?
52. Who is the blonde female field archaeologist on the Time Team?
53. Who was the eponymous star of the film *Lucky Jim*?
54. What was the outcome of Rigsby's nuptial plans in *Rising Damp*?
55. TV buffs will remember Leonard Williams as Sergeant Twentyman: in which series?
56. 'Who' was the First Time Lord?
57. In chronological terms, what do the letters A.U.C. indicate?
58. Approximately, in how many years would the Julian calendar result in the gain of a whole, single day?
59. Which astronomer was the first to be provided with a purpose-built observatory in Europe since 1500 AD?
60. What revolutionary navigational instrument was invented by Elmer Ambrose Sperry in 1907?
61. What type of vessel is a Zulu?
62. Who was the author who created the Ramage series of historical naval novels?
63. Under which other name did Douglas Reeman write the Bolitho series now long ended? When was his hero killed?
64. What was the recently deceased Patrick O'Brian's baptismal name and nationality?
65. What were his character Stephen Maturin's professions and hobbies?
66. For what purpose did Captain Ridley form his 'Shooting Party' at Bletchley Park in August 1939?
67. What substance, only, may be used legally as cartridge pellets for shooting wild fowl from 1999 onwards?
68. To which particular species of geese does the Isle of Islay offer protected wintering grounds?
69. Which one of these geese is further protected at the R.S.P.B. reserve at Caerlaverock on the Solway?
70. What was the name of the Whithorn fishing vessel lost in the January storms in the Irish Sea?
71. To whom is the Priory Church at Whithorn dedicated?
72. Which cathedral, dedicated to St. Thomas de Canteloupe, noted for the '*mappa mundi*', its chained library and Songs of Praise, witnessed its bishop with his female ordinands dancing round the gravestones?
73. Even spicier, what was Mel G before she became Mel G?
74. Which shoeless, stockingless and 'more or less' song bird won the Eurovision Song Contest with *Puppet on a String*? Who was the commentator who seemed on the verge of total hysteria?
75. What was the late Ted Hughes' (Poet Laureate) favourite pastime?
76. Which literary prize was he awarded posthumously?
77. Whose behavioural hypotheses based on her anthropological studies in Samoa are now unfashionable?
78. What form of behaviour is the 'Couvade'?
79. Which 'media' and fertility expert/physician reported his mother's 13-hour wait for treatment for her diabetes at a well-known London hospital?
80. How much energy does the average person consume in Kilocalories at rest?
81. Which endocrine gland principally affects the human basal metabolic rate?
82. What are the agreed acceptable weight limits for an adult female of 5 foot and 4 inches without clothes? At what weight would she become obese? Answers in imperial or metric scales.
83. What is the Body Mass Index (BMI) and how is it calculated?
84. Recap: What is described by the terms: Ectomorph, Mesomorph and Endomorph?
85. We have Zola the novelist; what was his forename: Zola the runner, what is her surname: and now Zola (Gianfranco); which club does he play for? Or hope to?
86. Which old boy of Shrewsbury won the Olympic 400 metres hurdles in 1932 at Los Angeles and was still fit enough and in sufficient training to perform again unofficially in Los Angeles in 1986?
87. At the same Olympics (1986), what dubious catastrophe befell Mary Decker?
88. Who was the London solicitor who repeatedly attacked and so nearly reached the 4-minute mile pre- and post-war? Without WWII, he might well have succeeded.
89. Steve Redgrave is fabulous, but I have reason to consider JHT Wilson as good, and the best-ever natural oarsman. With whom did he win the Gold Olympic medal for the pair oars in 1948, neither of them having touched an oar for a decade in the Sudan?
90. What was the function of a nippy in her now vanished house?
91. What was the link between the 'Quarrymen' and the 'Beatles'?
92. What was the vesting date of the National Health Service? What were its predecessors, G.P. (colloquial name) and hospital services, known as?
93. Concomitant with the Falklands War, what form of visitation was Britain subjected to after a 443-year gap?
94. Who were the last women in Europe to be enfranchised?
95. Which 'country music' group crashed into the Pop charts in 1954?
96. Who is literally the fastest man on earth?
97. How long, since when, has Mr. MacGregor been plagued by Peter Rabbit?
98. What type of theatrical production was *Harlequin Executed*, staged by John Rich on Boxing Day 1717?
99. What was the appropriate title of the Marx Brothers' first film?
100. When and on which occasion were wax shop window dummies first exhibited?

# KINMONT WILLIE IN CARLISLE

*John Burke tells a tale to whet your appetite for the function*

VISITORS TO CARLISLE CASTLE during the Mastermind Club weekend will find that, although there are records over the centuries of its being captured and recaptured by large English and Scottish armies, only the briefest reference is made to one of the most spectacular episodes in its history – perhaps because this great Border stronghold has never liked to admit that a small force of violent men could breach its defences so swiftly.

In the days when the turbulent Borders between England and Scotland were constantly at the mercy of reivers – raiders and cattle rustlers – one of the most feared rogues was the Scot, William Armstrong, known as Kinmont Willie. He and his rough riders plagued the valley of the North Tyne, burning English villages and seizing hundreds of cattle at a time. In 1583 Lord Scrope, irascible Warden of the West March of England, specifically asked royal permission to “apprehend some of these notorious offenders” singling out Armstrong for special condemnation.

Such rough measures were difficult to countenance at a time when Elizabeth I of England and the advisers of James VI of Scotland were maintaining an uneasy truce between the two countries. In the to-and-fro of local robbery and killing, Wardens of the Marches on either side met formally at intervals to settle claims and counter-claims diplomatically. But both authorities had to admit their impotence in the face of ruthless reivers.

At one meeting of March Wardens to settle cross-Border disputes, a complaint was laid by

the inhabitants of Tynedale against William Elliott of Bradley, the Laird of Mangerton, and William Armstrong called Kynmott and 1000 horsemen for taking 1005 head of nolt (*cattle*), 1000 sheep and goats, 24 horses and meares, burning an onsett and mill, and taking insight (*household goods*) worth £300 sterling, done 6<sup>th</sup> October 1593.

Such protests did nothing to check the rapacity of Kinmont Willie. Frustration finally drove the English to take a step in flagrant breach of a code hitherto honoured by even the most bitter rivals.

Wardens’ meetings were held on Days of Truce, when free conduct was guaranteed to men on both sides until sunrise the following day, allowing time for all those attending to ride safely away. But on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1596, after such a meeting at Kershopefoot in Liddesdale ended, Kinmont Willie, heading for home, was seized by a posse of English riders and imprisoned in Carlisle Castle.

This outraged every principle of Border negotiations, and drew a furious response from Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, Keeper of Liddesdale. One of the greatest of the Border Ballads has him thundering:

And have they e’en ta’en him, Kinmont Willie,  
Withouten either dread or fear?  
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch  
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

The bold Buccleuch in fact tried a correct diplomatic approach at first, but when he found this was not going to impress the English, he raised a troop of riders – forty to eighty, according to various accounts – and set out to recover their countryman. On a rainy night they crossed the river Eden and broke into Carlisle Castle by means of gavrocks (*crowbars*), picks, axes and scaling ladders, took the garrison by surprise, and carried Kinmont Willie out of his cell, complete with iron shackles. Although the castle was in their hands, Buccleuch scrupulously forbade his followers to indulge in any looting, and led them triumphantly back across the Eden Water.

He turn’d him on the other side  
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he —  
“If ye like na my visit in merry England,  
In fair Scotland come visit me!”

Instead of which the hapless Scrope (son of that Scrope who 13 years earlier had complained about this same William Armstrong) had to work out excuses to send to London, where they were none too well received.

## **Web note**

*To find out more, try the [www.reivers.com](http://www.reivers.com) website. There’s a gazeteer, pictures, and various multimedia bits – Ed.*

# FROM *MASTERMIND* TO *MASTERCHEF*

## *Tony Kelly on his unusual double*

I STILL HAVE THE VIDEOTAPE of my Andy Warhol moment of 11 February 1988 – my appearance on *Mastermind*. The simple fact of having made it onto the most prestigious television quiz programme ever was enough, but I thoroughly enjoyed the ensuing notoriety and attention lavished upon me locally, and do to this day. I did a lot of talks, lectures and associated functions for the many bodies and organisations apparently desperate for anybody who had done anything, let alone been on *Mastermind*. I still get a buzz from acknowledging that I was a contender (Marlon Brando, eat your heart out!).

If the late lamented Doris May Kelly had done nothing else in her life, and she did many things, she left her three sons with the basic knowledge of domestic survival. Washing and ironing one's clothes, general personal hygiene, social decorum and – most importantly – how to cook for and feed oneself.

My mother had always been gastronomically hampered by the fact of my father's ulcer and his innate conservatism in foodstuff. His tastes strayed little from the predictable and mundane, mother's cleaved to the exotic and romantic despite a background little experienced in such things.

BEING THE ELDEST CHILD, at ten years of age, I was able, with my mother, to enter into our conspiracy of the exotic and oriental businessman's lunch! We then lived in Crosby on the outskirts of Liverpool. I had passed my eleven-plus exam whilst still only ten (2 September is a duff birthday!); we had to get school uniform from only specified suppliers in the centre of Liverpool: I believe Home & Co were the ones we went to. That day in 1958, my mum and I had our first lunch at an Indian restaurant on London Road.

It was like setting off fireworks. The spices, the flavours, the textures. YE GODS!! RICE was only had in PUDDINGS? This was lift-off!

On future sojourns we experimented with Chinese cuisine and other sources of food that did not have to conform to the prescribed dietary pap required by my father's gastric condition, which incidentally was mostly self-inflicted (not

to say self-indulgent).

My mother was frustrated in her culinary aspirations by circumstances; not so her sons. We all fare well in the kitchen. My eye, therefore, was taken in 1990 by a programme which aimed to be the culinary competition to match the revered *Mastermind*, i.e. *Masterchef*.

I admit it did not register greatly to begin with; however, after a few years I began to note a comparable level of aspiration, competence, expertise and creativity which interested me as an amateur cook and as a previous *Mastermind* contestant. I first applied and was accepted for the regional heats in 1995, disastrously.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that there is a greater level of humiliation in having your carefully prepared food rejected than in getting an answer wrong. However, a learning curve had begun.

After a gap of a year due to scheduling, a further attempt in 1997 yielded further experience and understanding, whilst 1998 gained the dizzy heights of being the 'First Reserve' for the North-West region. The 1999 programming slipped by. I had a target: *Masterchef* 2000 or forget it for ever! To my delight and amazement, in October 1999 I was one of the three North-West regional heat winners in a competition held at Salford University.

What one does not realise when participating in *Masterchef* is that, after being accepted as a heat winner, one has to produce not only a menu for the televised regional final, but two further menus (tried and tested) – in case you win the regional final and go through to the semi-final, and who knows, the grand final!

This, of course, entailed the gastronomic torture of my other half and various friends and family in being desperate guinea pigs as I forced three-course meals down their throats. The pitiful cries of "Less! Less!" still echo in my ears. (In whose dreams?) Having subjected these poor devils to hours of gustatory torment I felt ready to face the ultimate foe: Loyd Grossman!

# FROM *MASTERMIND* TO *MASTERCHEF*

(continued)

It's a long way from Kendal to Maidstone, 336 miles to be precise. My partner and I had decided that no matter what happened in the competition, having driven this far and being only 28 miles from the Shuttle, we would reward ourselves with a long weekend in northern France. In reality that WAS the prize for taking part – why else would anybody sensibly wish to go to Maidstone?

6:15AM FRIDAY 21 JANUARY 2000: I am not at my best; I am never at my best at times that start with single digits, particularly as I need to be up and about for three or four hours before eating and becoming human. MY GOD! I have to cook a three-course meal for four people in a television studio whilst feeling like death! AAAAAARGH!

Follow lovely Katy (the Director's right arm) in her car from hotel to studio. Why are all these people on our road at this time on a cold Friday in January? Worse still they obviously do not realise that my blood sugar level is very low and I will kill every one of them if they don't GET OUT OF MY WAY!

Curiously, when we reach the studios I feel quite calm. I have things to do, stuff to set up, a yellow-coloured kitchen with which to become acquainted. I instantly hate the halogen kitchen hob. I know they are crap for real cooking – the in-laws have one; I wouldn't give one dustbin room. I cook on a four-ring propane gas stove with integral oven. Instant heat, plenty of control, no problem. Envisage nightmares to come. Evidently I am prescient, considering what follows.

It transpires that altogether something over thirty people are involved in the production of a *Masterchef* programme. We are gently broken in by meeting odd ones and twos. It becomes increasingly difficult to identify by name the ever-growing introduced team of individuals all wearing identical black *Masterchef* tee-shirts.

One, Richard, showed me how to operate an alien ice-cream machine, which apparently must have a slug of vodka to stop it seizing up. I found myself strangely identifying with the ice-cream machine. Then Gabrielle

was introduced, also there to provide anything required. She also being very attractive, I thought it best to concentrate on the task in hand.

Then another pleasant female person took my hand and dragged me off to make-up. Having endured this before, I was at least prepared for the vicious show-all-warts lights, and the reflection before me in the make-up mirror. My God IT IS CRUEL?!! Back in the studio there are even more black tee-shirted persons. At this point I must say that every single person involved in this crazy escapade is a delight. All the crew make it plain that they are there simply to help us and make our involvement in this weird experience as pleasant and enjoyable as possible. We are told that when the cooking time starts we cannot leave our kitchens, but must simply demand whatever we need and someone will bring it from the massive selection of kitchen gear that we each have at our disposal. Such power!

Back to reality. A very tiny lady sticks a battery and box on my trouser belt, ticklishly shoves a wire up my shirt and plants a minute microphone on my shirt front.

The set is amazing. The giant bottles, pasta jars, pepper grinder, bowl of olives – all are quite wonderful. Apparently the guy who made them for the programme used to just make small items in Perspex. When asked to make a set comprising a four-metre vinegar bottle, a three-metre pasta jar and all the rest, he somehow sourced the largest sheets of Perspex in the world and made them. As a designer silversmith I was very impressed.

We then gathered on the set with Richard Bryan the producer/director. We were Lise Olson, an American lady from the Wirral who taught at the Liverpool College of Performing Arts, Mandy Roper from Silloth on the Solway, and myself. Richard chatted and explained that, being television, nothing was as it seemed, as if we didn't know: it was still the middle of the night as far as my body clock was concerned.

Enter Carrie. She was the floor manager of the studio and can only be described as indomitable. When she shouted,

the crew did exactly as they were told. She was ubiquitous and solicitous as to how we fared, and the camera crews responded instantly to her calls. She was terrifically efficient, and helped me with my melting ice cream whilst setting up at the end.

Lloyd Grossman proved to be a revelation. His strangely strangulated transatlantic vowels that you hear via the television are curiously hardly evident when you talk to the man face to face. Something happens between him saying the words and them getting out the other side and it is very odd. He is pleasant, witty, charming, engages us in general chitchat and banter. He has his lines and script to follow and autocue to read. Altogether, very professional.

You know the bit in the finished programme where the opening shot shows the contestants, then Lloyd comes out and spiels to camera, then the biographies of the contestants come on, then Lloyd sits and chats to contestants, discusses menus, contestants describe their menus, then Lloyd says "Let's go cook". It doesn't happen like that. Oh, no!

The biographies have been filmed two months beforehand and are edited down to fit the programme. We do "Let's go cook" four bloody times. Each time Lloyd says it to camera, we idiots leap up and gallop enthusiastically and purposefully to our respective kitchens and don aprons ready to commence. I have the furthest to travel to reach my kitchen – by the fourth go for camera angles, I'm knackered. I've covered what feels like at least a couple of miles and have to crawl back to the yellow seat on the set for the next back-to-front bit of televising. I know there's logic in it somewhere: the point is where?

We are late! It's not our fault. You see, ours is the first recording of the new series. We are the guinea pigs. A pity no one told us before! Or perhaps it is just as well. Now the reality is, I've got to put my spatula where my mouth is, and go for it!

That wonderfully edited smoothly transitional programme elegantly segueing from kitchen to kitchen, guest to guest,

cook to cook, bears no relationship to reality. What you (and I, heretofore, for that matter) are unaware of is the fact that there are three frantic cooks trying to produce a three-course meal for four people to be served all at the same time. How many people eat like that? How many professional chefs have to cook like that? ANSWER: BIG ZERO. None, niente, nul, niet. Not only that but they have to do it in a studio with 30-odd crew milling about with ten or twelve cameras.

Whilst cooking on the useless hob there's a camera up my nose, there's one over my shoulder watching me nervously chopping my fingers off, I even had one cameraman shout at me: "Oi, Tony, show us your red peppers from under the grill!" Godammit, I did as well. Mind you they did look gorgeous, all blackened skins and blood-red flesh. The fact that I was trying to make my drop-scone batter at the time was obviously just not good television.

Once the "Let's go cook" time started, being restricted to our relevant coloured kitchens and having to demand any artefact we lacked from others, I apparently caused great amusement to our accompanists in the Green Room at the studio by petulantly demanding: "Spoons! Spoons! I must have spoons!" It sounds almost Dame Edith Evans-ish. I think I was having a minor crisis.

Not, however, as great a crisis as with my butterscotch sauce. Melt butter and golden syrup, add muscovado sugar, continue to melt gently. Run out of wooden spoons, demand spoons or spatulas, get handful of spatulas. Choose most appropriate, stir butterscotch sauce, which is doing nicely, leave to gently simmer.

The butterscotch sauce appears to still have streaks of unmelted butter. How can this be? Stir sauce and watch fascinated as white streaks pervade my lovely rich brown sauce. The penny drops as I lift up the white plastic spatula from my lovely sauce to observe the ugly molten end dribbling into the pan! Hysteria bubbling just below the surface. The floor manager screeches and rushes off to return and inform me that the guest chef is sure that the

# FROM *MASTERMIND* TO *MASTERCHEF*

(continued)

addition of molten plastic to the sauce will be of little relevance and is perfectly safe to eat.

I assure the floor manager, in no uncertain terms, that I have no intention whatsoever of being responsible for the poisoning of the judges by PCB's, Dioxin or any other toxic noxious chemicals formed by the melting of THEIR bloody useless kitchen apparel. I mean to say, MELTING BLOODY SPATULAS? Choice of spatulas? Nul points!

Back to drawing board, 20 minutes to go, instant butterscotch sauce, of course not as good as the original. Feeling under pressure and pee'd off!

Oh yes. On top of that, idiot that I am, I'd forgotten to bring from home my special non-stick drop-scone griddle pan. Have to wing it with a non-stick frying pan. Not the same, bugger!

During all of this, Loyd swans in with first of all Phil Vickary, who is very likeable and easy to chat with. They demand Damson Gin and Damson Cheese and are supplied with both. They then sneak back up on me and give me the third degree on quail; fortunately I had some I had prepared earlier!

Later on Loyd bounces in with Helen Lederer, who, though pleasant and charming, does not give the impression of great depth of knowledge of the subject, with conversation which at best is superficial. Perhaps that is harsh, but hell, we're under pressure here.

By the way, the 'Cabbage coloured ten minutes left' bit was recorded at that very time with Ms. Lederer in my Yellow kitchen. It was, in fact, 25 minutes from the end – they just like to do it that way!

In the last ten minutes the pressure is really on. We have to plate up each dish twice, setting up the best for the table for firstly the still shots with table decoration as preferred. Then we have to move those dishes and/or replacements for the actual tasting part for the judges.

My pudding was the problem. The combination of hot

drop-scones, hot butterscotch sauce, with vanilla ice cream under studio lights proved to be fun. My presentation involved an arrangement of three drop-scones about a small stack of two drop-scones in the centre of the plate, the butterscotch sauce poured over generously, then the frozen 50 x 25 mm disc of vanilla ice cream perched on top of the central drop-scones garnished with a spray-sliced fresh strawberry.

Unfortunately, though perfect at home, this arrangement under studio heat meant the ice cream went walkabout. It would not stay perched centrally on the plate but slid off in any direction it so pleased to go. So much so that we extemporised with the stills photographer. I held the ice cream in place with one finger. At the count of "3-2-1, OFF!" I hastily withdrew my digit, pictures were taken, I replaced finger to support ice cream. Totally barmy. The poor floor manager Carrie had to do the same with my second pudding, which was held in the freezer until the last minute before being placed on the table in time for the judges to taste before total collapse.

You will have gathered by now that the judges get to sample only cold and/or melted and certainly deteriorated food by the time it gets to them. If they weren't getting well paid for it, you could be tempted to feel a little pity. As a gastronaut, even though they are paid to appear, I still feel sorry for the fact that they do not actually enjoy our food at its very best. It seems there is no better way of doing this programme, or so we are told. It is, after all, primarily a 'Television' programme. The truth dawns.

The aspirations of *Masterchef* are indeed totally admirable. Richard Bryan, the producer/director, is the epitome of gentlemanly consideration in every way that I could evince. Nonetheless, the reality of the programme as experienced first-hand is that of a slight disappointment that the practicalities of the televisual process as the programme format has settled into, actually precludes the food produced being enjoyed at its best, at peak. This, I suppose, is the reality of television production. *Masterchef* is

the epitome of cooking programmes, no doubt. One does tend to wonder about some of the others?

Meanwhile, despite the fact that we, the contestants, are herded to the duly appointed place for the final decision (which incidentally took longer than ever before), and that various camera shots are required during the tastings, a glance over the shoulder reveals that a plague of locusts has descended on the three kitchens, in the form of the studio crew. “Where’s your ice cream?” was demanded of me by one cameraman, “And the butterscotch sauce?” by his mate.

“Over there!” I indicated vaguely. By this time, I noticed the sound lady who had shoved her hand up my shirt demolishing with gusto some of my grilled breast of quail.

Each of the three kitchens was the same, being hoovered for comestibles by eager studio crew. In a bizarre way, I felt it was complimentary that the people who were making my life so difficult whilst I was cooking should be so avidly munching through the remains of the programme they were working on. By the way, I never got a chance to taste the other contestants’ menus, nor they mine. That programme is populated by the equivalent of a gourmet disposal team.

Bon appetit!

*P.S. For the result of the experience, watch Masterchef around about early April. The North-West final is number 5 in the running, whenever the schedule starts – allegedly early March.*

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## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

### RICHARD STURCH

My apologies to solvers for not having indicated that 6 down was two words!

#### ACROSS

1. Aberdeen
6. North
8. Grenville
9. Law
10. Eden
11. George
13. Pelham
14. Castle
17. Attlee
18. Peel
20. New
22. Liverpool
24. Derby
25. Rosebery

#### DOWN

1. Argue
2. Dove
3. Eelbed
4. Arkle
5. Shawnee
6. New road
8. Ewell
12. Hastily
13. Pernods
15. Toe
16. Servio
17. Aware
19. Lolly
21. Tree
23. OBE

# A–Z OF WINE

*If you're still game, try Richard Goodale's Masterwined quiz*

- A. Rank (1–5) the following countries by their world-wide production of wine in 1964:
- Algeria
  - America (USA)
  - Argentina
  - Austria
  - Australia
- B. Bastardo is:
- any wine of unknown provenance
  - a grape variety used to make Port
  - Glasgow slang for any cheap red wine
  - a town at the centre of the Chilean wine industry
  - the bottle shape traditionally used for Grappa
- C. Cabinet Wine is:
- wine with a pronounced nose of cedar or sandalwood
  - Edinburgh slang for wine which is too good to serve to your guests
  - a special claret bottled in Leith for sale to 10 Downing Street
  - Madeira sent 'around the horn' for special ageing
  - a German wine of high quality
- D. Which of the following has NOT been a wine produced by Randall Grahm at Bonny Doon winery in California?
- Le Cigare Volante
  - Hasta la Vista
  - Clos de Gilroy Grenache
  - Ca' del Solo Big House Red
  - Old Telegram
- E. Est! Est! Est! is:
- An Egyptian wine honouring the goddess Isis
  - A white Italian wine 'discovered' by Bishop Fugger in 1111AD
  - The Roman name for the wine now called Inferno
  - A Slovakian aperitif
  - A boutique winery in the Swan Valley of Western Australia
- F. If a wine is said to be 'foxy' it would smell most like:
- a fox
  - an expensive but slightly tarty perfume
  - vitis labrusca (the native American 'fox-grape')
  - Vitas Gerulaitis
  - Anna Kournekova
- G. Which district of Bordeaux shares its name with a former Poet Laureate?
- H. Was 'Count' Agoston Haraszthy:
- "the father of California viticulture."
  - the owner of a famous Tokay vineyard
  - cellar master to the Romanovs
  - a notorious wine fraudster
  - the moderator of a 50's BBC Radio 4 chat show about wine
- I. Which of the following countries was the world's leading wine Importer in 1964?
- Belgium
  - Britain
  - France
  - Germany
  - USA
- J. Which of the following descriptions of wine has NOT been used by Jilly Goolden on the BBC programme *Food and Drink*?
- "Sassy as a trollop's patter."
  - "It just hits you with massive whiffs of new paint, week-old haggis and blaeberris!"
  - "I don't know about you, Oz, but this wine is so fabulous, I'd serve it at my mother-in-law's funeral."
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
- K. The Charles Krug winery in the Napa Valley is owned by which family?
- Krug
  - Charles
  - Mondavi
  - Lewinsky
  - Rothschild
- L. La Rioja is a wine producing province of which country?
- Argentina
  - Chile
  - Spain
  - Mexico
  - USA
- M. In a butt of which wine was an unfortunate(?) Duke of Clarence drowned?
- Madeira
  - Malmsey
  - Margaux
  - Mersault
  - Muscadet
- N. Which of the following is NOT a name for the 'noble rot' (the fungus which creates all great sweet desert wines, e.g. Chateau D'Yquem, Tokay.....)?
- Aszu
  - Botrytis Cinera
  - Edelfaule
  - Pourriture Noble
  - Quintisenziale

- O. What is (or was) 'Opus One'?
- The code name used for the first classification of Bordeaux wines in 1855
  - Schubert's Symphony (unfinished, due to the composer's fondness for hock)
  - The code name for the Allied commando raid on Goering's wine cellar
  - A hybrid grape variety created by the University of California, Davis
  - A wine jointly produced by the Mondavi and Rothschild families
- P. Which famous wine takes its name from a Roman poet?
- Chateau Ausone
  - Inferno
  - Verdicchio
  - Chateau Petrus
  - Hardy's
- Q. If one asked for 'un quart de rouge' in a Paris bistro, one might expect to get:
- 250 cl of the house red
  - the list of red wines available for sale
  - a lecture on one's pronunciation from the waiter
  - two litres of the house red
  - thrown out of the establishment
- R. 'Rinse Cochon' (Pig Rinse) is an affectionate(?) French term for?
- Gewurztraminer
  - Any wine made outside of France
  - Kir
  - Pink Champagne
  - Chateau Grillet
- S. Is 'Shiraz':
- A terrorist group based at the famous winery, Chateau Musar
  - A French wine grape used by and linguistically bastardised by the Aussies
  - The host of BBC's *Wines of the Moray Firth* programme.
  - The first phoneme of the classic Glaswegian phrase "Shirazhell you don't think that Amoruso should have been sent off, you Fenian bastard! – and gie us another glass of that Beaujolais Nouveau while you're up at the bar."
- T. The small silver cup which sommeliers use for tasting wine is called a:
- tastevin
  - trou court
  - tirageur
  - taupette
  - thingy
- U. The Latin word for grape is:
- uva
  - uvula
  - umbria
  - ubella
  - umyum
- V. Which of the following is not a wine region?
- Valdepenas
  - Valois
  - Val du Nican
  - Valpolicella
  - Valenica
- W. A 'weeper' is slang for:
- a wine so good it makes you cry
  - a bottle with wine oozing from the cork
  - a wine from the Wieprau region of Germany
  - a miniature bottle, as served on planes
  - a wine so bad it makes you cry
- X. The French word for sherry is:
- Xeres
  - Xerxes
  - Xerox
  - XO
  - X-rated
- Y. *Saccharomyces Ellipsoideus* is:
- The Roman name of a famous Yugoslavian wine district
  - an enzyme that imparts the yellow tinge to Jura wines
  - the 'true wine maker' of yeasts
  - a transitory sweetness that sometimes affects young wines
  - a parasite affecting the Yalumba vineyards in South Australia
- Z. The Zinfandel grape, once thought native to America, has just recently been traced to which country?
- France
  - Germany
  - Italy
  - Cyprus
  - Armenia

# THE RENDEZVOUS

## *Shafi Ahmed's translation of Rabindranath Tagore*

IF YOU SAW THE 1997 HEATS AT BLENHEIM PALACE, you may recall Magnus' introduction of me also as an award-winning poet. I send you a poem (original in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, Indian Nobel laureate 1913) about an incident between a Buddhist Monk and a Hindu dancing girl 2300 years ago in India, recorded in Sanskrit. Tagore, a Hindu Brahmin by origin but later converted to Brahmo Shamaj (modern, i.e. almost anglicised, Hinduism, akin to Unitarianism), was moved to give it poetic form and I a Muslim am similarly emotionally moved to render it in English for a wider audience. This says much for the universality and transcendence of Poetry amongst mankind.

### *I*

Upagupta, Buddha's young priest  
By Mathura City's cobbled old streets  
    once was asleep.  
The city's lamps the wind had blown  
Doors were shut in every home  
The night's stars over a cloud's dome  
    were completely adrift.  
  
Suddenly a pair of tinkling feet  
    touched him on his chest.  
With the shock of a rude surprise  
His sleep was broken in a trice  
But the harsh light hitting his eyes  
    re-bounced in benign best.  
  
The most accomplished dancing belle  
    was walking to a tryst.  
She was dressed in a sky-blue gown  
Her anklets made a tinkling sound  
Bashavadot'tah stooped down  
    as her toes caressed the priest.  
  
She raised the lamp to see the priest's  
    fairest fresh complexion.  
With cleanly shaven head and face  
Smiling eyes and forgiving gaze  
A broad forehead pulsed with grace  
    to calm all situation.  
  
The embarrassed girl softly spoke  
    with a lump in her throat:  
"Forgive me O' Prince celibate  
This stony ground is not your bed  
Please come with me to rest your head  
    in my humble abode".  
  
The ascetic spoke in a kind voice:  
    "O' beautiful maid  
Speed along to keep your term  
The time for me has just begun  
When it's due then I shall come  
    to keep our mutual date".  
  
Suddenly a streak of lightning flash  
    rent the heart of clouds.  
The girl trembled in utter fright  
The wind increased its howling might  
And thunder rumbled across the night  
    like a Giant's shout.

### *II*

The Buddhist year had not yet passed  
    and Spring was in the air.  
The wind hummed love-songs every hour  
The roadside trees formed leafy bowers  
In King's garden thousands of flowers  
    burgeoned to blossom there.  
  
From afar on evening breeze  
    floated the sound of flutes.  
Everyone had left the city  
To join in the festivity  
Of the Spring full moon shining pretty  
    in honey-yielding woods.  
  
Under the moon on a lone road  
    the young monk walked enthralled.  
Above his head in leafy heights  
Cuckoo-calls echoed left and right  
Was it then the appointed night  
    of his promise to call?  
  
Out of the city the priest went  
    past the perimeter wall.  
He dropped his staff beyond the moat  
Along the shade of a mango grove  
And stepped over a woman's cloak  
    to kneel beside a girl.  
  
Poison pox had marred her body  
    in a terrible blight.  
The disease had weakened her much.  
The citizens had shunned her touch  
And dragged her through a gated arch  
    to dump her out of sight.  
  
The young monk sat on the ground  
    and cradled her in his arm.  
He moistened her cracked dry lips  
Recited psalms to bring relief  
Covered her wounds with finger tips  
    dipped in a healing balm.  
  
The blossom-spores fell, cuckoos sang  
    the moonbeams glowed softer.  
"Who are you Lord by my side?"  
Asked the girl, the monk replied:  
"Tonight is the destined night  
    I've come Bashavadot'tah".