He flies through the air with the greatest of ease…! See page 18

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Officers and Committee

President Alan D. Blackburn
Hon. Vice-President Tony Dart
Secretary Gavin Fuller
Treasurer Susan Leng
Membership Secretary Peter W. J. Chitty
Editor of pass Ken Emond
Committee Members
Patricia Owen
Ann Kelly
Phillida Grantham

Club Shopping

Please note that prices quoted below no longer include postage and packing. If ordering insignia to be delivered by post, please add £3 per item. Send a cheque with your order, payable to the Mastermind Club, to:

Phillida Grantham

New Insignia!

Polo Shirts
Navy (M (limited quantity), L, XL) 15.00
Red (M (limited quantity), L, XL) 15.00
Bottle Green (M (limited quantity), L, XL) 15.00

Jackets
Reversible Mistral (S, M, L) 23.95
Weatherwise (M, L) 19.95
Polar Fleece (S, M, L) 18.50

Ties
Maroon (multi-logo) 7.00

T-shirts
White on dark navy (L, XL, XXL) 6.00, or 3 for £10.00 (special offer)

Sweatshirts
Oatmeal (L) 15.00
Red (L, XL) 15.00

Jewellery
Stick pins 6.00
Editorial
Ken Emond, Editor

The Club has some wonderful new insignia which I am delighted to take this opportunity to plug unashamedly. Phillida has organised some high-quality polo shirts, ideal for the summer, in a variety of colours: navy blue, bottle green and red. Polo shirts are, of course, ideally worn loose, so we have not ordered any small sizes, but they are available in medium, large or extra large. I already have the navy blue myself, and I think it is a real bargain for just £15.

As Peter has mentioned below, there are unfortunately a few members of the Club who have not yet revised the payment of their standing orders. Those affected have all been contacted by letter by Peter, and he will continue to make every effort to ensure that nobody is unaware of the problem. Regrettably, the Committee has been forced to decide that, in the light of continually rising costs, anyone who has not paid the additional five pounds for this year before the time of distribution of the next issue of pass in early September, will not be sent the remaining two issues of the magazine for this year. Knowing how important pass is as the medium for keeping all members in touch with what is happening, we very much hope that this step will not be necessary.

This is the usual bumper issue following the AGM, with details of the recent gathering. On pages 6-8, you will find details of a questionnaire about what you want out of the annual reunions which I hope you will be willing to answer. It is in all our interests to ensure that the Club continues to thrive.

Note: As most of you will know by now I very much welcome contributions to pass from all members. There is no particular theme or pre-set length. The deadline for copy for the next issue will be 31 July. Submission can be made by e-mail (to kene@britac.ac.uk), but I am, of course, happy to hear from everyone in hard copy instead for those who don’t use e-mail.

Stop Press
Gavin Fuller

It has proved rather interesting finding a venue for next year's get-together. Despite a number of ideas for venues being floated at this year’s AGM, none of them in the event proved viable as I ended up taking a virtual tour across Southern England looking for somewhere practicable. I did find somewhere in the end, and as a result next year we'll be convening on 9th-11th April at the Mercure Southgate Hotel in Exeter. More details and a booking form will follow in the last issue of this year.

Membership matters
Peter Chitty, Membership Secretary

Another Gathering has come and gone. I hope that everyone who attended had a very pleasant time, I most certainly did. Once again it was all thanks to all the hard work put in by our Secretary Gavin Fuller that it ran so smoothly. Thank you Gavin!

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Michael O’Sullivan a member since 1987. Mike and I were both in the same heat that was recorded at the University of Kent in Canterbury in March 1987. He was very knowledgeable on his specialist subject, the Strauss Family. I am sure that Margaret Spiller who won the heat and went on to the final will also remember him. We became good friends. But unfortunately in later years ill health took it toll. I shall be attending his funeral.

I have sent out letters to all those of you who pay by Standing Order and forgot to complete a new one for 2010, to remind you to either notify your bank or fill in the enclosed form and and return it to me with a cheque for £5.00 to cover the remainder of this year. To those of you who have already replied, thank you.
Letters, news and views

So just what is so special about a Mastermind Club Reunion?

From David Cowan

A good chance to see a group of friend I only see once a year… And a great opportunity to see Blackpool after 30 years!

From Stewart Cross

Great weather, great company and great fun! The choice of Blackpool worked well for a good time weekend…

From Peter and Nina Richardson

Peter: I would never have been up Blackpool Tower but for this meeting – and it was an astonishingly memorable experience

Nina: I have been coming for 30 years as a guest and have enjoyed every meeting and every venue – they have been an education…

From Ray Ward

Last time I went up Blackpool Tower was in about 1962! And it didn’t have the Walk of Faith [illustrated below]… Just one aspect of an excellent weekend… Thanks to all concerned.

From Patricia Owen

Lovely to see some old friends who have not been with us for a while…
From Ken Emond (overheard in the corridor outside the room in which the reunion took place…)

“…they’ve all been on telly, you know – they’ve all been on that Masterchef…!”

From Mel Kinsey

Great weekend, good food, good drink, a great quiz on Saturday night, but most of all meeting up with fellow Masterminders to natter about many things and reminisce about the show…

From Pat Fuller

In 2004, when the Mastermind Club Reunion/AGM weekend was held in Portsmouth – Gavin’s home area – he invited my husband Doug and myself to be his guests at the Saturday evening dinner. This was a pleasurable evening and we have been delighted to attend subsequent gatherings. This year was the sixth occasion, and for us, another unknown location to discover. The main pleasure, however, of these times is meeting again the people we have come to know over the years, and knowing that we may come to know others a little more. I always return from these weekends feeling that I want to say ‘thank you’ to the members of the Club for their friendly and welcoming ambience.

Hopefully Gavin, our son, will continue to invite us to share these weekends, and we may also meet members who have not been to a previous gathering finding the pleasure of personal involvement with the Club.

Thanks to all

From Michael Davison

Yes, I Did Like To Be Beside The Seaside…

‘Shock Welcome to Blackpool: Naked Lady Found in Hotel Bathroom’. Well, okay, she was only a tasteful Victorian painting, but she gave a promising introduction to a weekend of seaside frolics centred upon the latest Mastermind reunion. If any members initially felt a little sniffy about down-market Blackpool as a venue for our up-market club, then I can only say that for me the weekend hugely bettered expectation.

Was there no local guide to show us the treasures of Blackpool, as we have come to expect on these jaunts? Not this time: as the man at the Tourist Office told me, ‘an old fellow does come sometimes in summer and sticks a note in our window about a
Heritage Walk – but we haven’t seen him yet this year’. But who needed a local guide when we had Kevin and Gavin to marshal us at the Imperial Hotel for a walk along the breezy Promenade straight to the famous Tower which, after all, is what Blackpool is all about?

For a first-time visitor like myself, the first surprise is that the Grade I listed Tower built in 1894 is only the centrepiece of a complex of varied entertainments, where our group soon became separated. Wendy Forrester and I found ourselves in an exhibition devoted to circus clown Charlie Caroli. Beyond this, pushing at a half-open door, we found ourselves in the upper gallery of the immense Tower Ballroom, face to face with its magnificent baroque wall paintings framing the names of famous composers.

The scale and grandeur of Frank Matcham’s Ballroom is breathtaking. Far below us, lit by immense chandeliers, couples of all ages twirled round a dance floor 40 yards square in the bossa nova and the quickstep, to the pounding beat of the mighty Wurlitzer organ. At 11.30 on a Saturday morning, the people of Blackpool (Blackpudlians?) at play. Shut off from the daylight in a timeless world of their own, they reminded me of gamblers in a Las Vegas casino. I was torn between marvelling at their grace and Strictly-Come-Dancing professionalism, and wanting to scream ‘Get a life!’

Of course getting to the top of the Tower is what we’d come here for, so Wendy and I followed the signs to where we found the Dart tribe, and others of our group, queuing for the lift. As it ascended, its glass walls revealed the steel girders of the Tower all the way up to the enclosed viewing gallery. Here Leslie Grout crouched beside the Walk of Faith, a glass floor over a dizzying perpendicular 380ft drop to The Promenade (‘In Case of Emergency do not Break Glass’). Another 47 stairs took me closer to the Tower’s 518ft pinnacle; a narrow platform open to the elements gives long views along the coast, as the wind buffets one’s face and creates a cacophony of noise among the girders.

It was a happy coincidence that this year’s Reunion coincided with the season’s first performance at the Tower Circus (another Frank Matcham design) set between the Tower’s four legs. I take a schoolboy delight in circuses, never missing a new Cirque du Soleil at the Albert Hall or Chinese acrobats in the local park. (‘Get a life’, do I hear you cry?) I have no doubt that several of the acts in Mooky’s Circus of Dreams were up there with the best of them. Up there in every sense: highlights were a trapeze artist hoisted aloft with a sword poised by its point on her chin, and a gyrating spaceship opening to disgorge two performers whirling round in a death-defying aerial ballet. All this without a single safety wire in sight, and accompanied by the music of a live (and very loud) band, whose numbers included the Vangelis theme from that much underrated film 1492: The Conquest of Paradise. How many circuses have you seen where the climax is provided by flooding the entire arena 4ft deep for a finale of leaping and illuminated water jets?

An impressive aquarium, and a Jurassic Walk with animated prehistoric creatures that flashed their eyes and gnashed their teeth, rounded off a good tenner’s worth at the Tower.

After four hours indoors and greatly in need of fresh air I headed a short way inland for Stanley Park, a green oasis laid out in the 1920s. Over the last few years Heritage Lottery funds have restored the Park’s centrepiece, a broad Italianate garden with a fountain flanked by spouting seahorses and copies of the Medici lions in Florence. A tall column commemorates William Cocker, Blackpool’s first mayor from 1876, who put the town on the map as a ‘health and pleasure resort’. Beyond Stanley Park lies the best Model Village I have seen, a beautifully crafted village community in miniature, remarkable in its attention to detail and spreading across nearly three landscaped acres.

Most visitors take at least an hour to explore the Model Village, but I had to cut my visit short to return to the Imperial for the serious business of the day. The Magnum Quiz was preceded by a sumptuous dinner of the standard expected of a hotel which has played host to many a political party conference. (On my floor I noticed ‘The President’s Suite’, though I didn’t knock to find out if our acting President was sleeping there within).

Other souls, I learned at dinner, had spent their day exploring other attractions of Blackpool: the Grundy Art Gallery (‘disappointing’, was one verdict) and the famous Pleasure Beach (did any members brave the Pepsi Max Big One, I wonder?). And on Sunday morning Blackpool laid on a final spectacle for us, the annual Marathon Run with its finishing point on the lower promenade just in front of our hotel.

The slightly lower numbers attending this year, and the Imperial’s wide choice of accommodation, enabled us to have all our group activities in one light and airy room (the Louis XVI suite, though no heads rolled). This gave to the 2009 Reunion, I thought, a particularly friendly and intimate feeling. However, we regular attendees have no desire to keep these annual revels to ourselves. Come next year and find out what goes on: you’ll have a weekend to remember, I can promise you!
From Leo Stevenson

A no-nonsense hard-hitting cold-blooded no-holds-barred unexpurgated assessment from a man who likes hyphens

Joining the Mastermind Club has been one of the best things I’ve ever done. I’ve made friends and had experiences that could never have happened anywhere else. The great thing about the Mastermind club is that we have all shared the same experience, we have all sat in that chair, but at the same time we all have such different interests, jobs or backgrounds; there isn’t another club like it!

For me the best thing about joining the club is the annual Mastermind weekends. Everyone usually experiences something, someone or somewhere that they haven’t come across before. The infinitely varying dynamics of each location and the people that attend this event is a very positive thing, and for most people who go it’s highly enjoyable. The ‘craic’, as the Irish say, is one of the main reasons I go. It’s possible to have conversations about almost any topic under the sun, but – contrary to common perceptions outside of the club – this isn’t a talking forum for the terminally boring, far from it! It can be a real laugh, and I guarantee that you’ll never meet such a range of people anywhere else. Also remember that members can bring guests such as friends or family to these weekends, so the mix is up to you.

Another aspect of these weekends that I enjoy is seeing places I’ve not been to before or, to be honest, may not have ever seen if I hadn’t been a member of the club, such as Carlisle, and this year, Blackpool. Those of you who have not attended these events don’t know what you are missing. Even if you’ve been to a particular town or city before, there is still a lot of pleasure to be had. For example, although I had previously been to Glasgow and Portsmouth, just seeing these places again with others with similar or even dissimilar interests gave the experience a wholly different and beneficial spin.

Ok, but hang on, Blackpool? Yes, Blackpool. As you probably know, ‘plan A’ for 2009 was supposed to be York (which is a bit different), but despite Gavin Fuller’s heroic efforts to find a suitable hotel there that would be reasonable on price, none of them would budge. The net result is that after a lot more effort Gavin secured The Imperial Hotel in Blackpool, and though this may seem an odd second choice, all-in-all this turned out to be a big success, and serendipity dealt us all a delightful time. The glorious weather, that Gavin always seems to mysteriously organise, also made it a really splendid weekend. York hasn’t got a beach anyway.

Let’s be frank here, most people think of Blackpool as the land of northern naff, i.e. candyfloss and Blackpool rock, kiss-mee-quick hats, Gypsy fortune tellers, sandcastles and whippet or pigeon owning men wearing knotted handkerchiefs. Well if that’s your impression, you’d be wrong, well, wrongish, but even so, come on, this is still part of our national heritage and our cultural identity; embrace it, love it, don’t mock it or spurn it. It is us. It is part of our native psyche as much as the white cliffs of Dover or the Yorkshire moors. Anyway, the working classes do not have a monopoly on bad taste even if all that were true. So, those of you who turned your noses up at the chance to see a place that you may never have otherwise visited have just missed out on a surprisingly interesting and delightful experience, and I say that sincerely, purposefully and without irony.

Maybe it’s because of the recession that you couldn’t make it to Blackpool, maybe some of you felt that this event or this place wasn’t for you for other reasons. Whatever the explanation, the fact is that this year the numbers attending were well down on previous years. This dwindling attendance might be part of a trend. I hope not. Mastermind is a smashing programme and almost by definition the people who appear on it have something very interesting about them – in addition to their daring! We need more people of this ilk to join us at these gatherings. Go on, you’d be very welcome. Most of us don’t bite, and those that do can be easily muzzled.

Even if you can’t make the annual events, remember that there are also regional gatherings on a monthly basis, for example in London we gather at The Grape Street wine bar near Holborn on the third Wednesday of every month. Contact a member in your area or a member of the committee to find out more.
Help us to help you!

So there you have a wide range of views about what some of those of us who came along to Blackpool enjoyed about the weekend reunion, but the question must now begin to be asked very seriously about whether it is really worth all of the effort involved in trying to organise such events for increasingly few members.

In an effort to understand how we might change, improve or otherwise get a better reaction to what your Club can provide for you, Leo has put together a questionnaire which we would be very grateful if all of you would take a few minutes to complete. There is no need to deface your copy of pass – please just email me (at kene@britac.ac.uk) or write me a short letter with your answers to the following questions. All of them require a fairly simple choice.

Please answer these questions and send them in to pass even if you haven’t been to any of the Mastermind Club’s weekends so far or for a long time. Whether you’ve been a passive or active member of the club, your opinions do matter. The information gathered will be immensely useful for future events and for the whole club. Please indicate in each case the answer that best describes your view.

COST
1. Balancing the costs and quality of hotel accommodation with the needs and desires of the members of the club has never been easy. Inevitably, some members feel that where we’ve stayed has been too expensive or posh whilst others may think the same place has been too down-market. On average, have we been getting the balance right?
   Agree? Not Sure? Disagree?

2. What do you feel would be an appropriate average amount to pay per person per night for hotel accommodation?
   [Please bear in mind that hotel accommodation in the UK is usually expensive and that this is not just about your personal desired amount but what you feel would be a fair average amount given our very disparate incomes and lifestyles.]

3. “You can’t please all of the people all of the time”; given this fact, if future events fell outside of your desired price range, would this put you off coming to these gatherings forever?
   Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

LOCATION
4. In recent years it’s been generally accepted by members that the location of our annual gatherings should alternate between the north and south of Britain (not totally discounting the bit in between of course!). Is this policy desirable?
   Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

5. The location of the next gathering has been decided at each AGM. However, finding a suitably large hotel at a reasonable price has been more and more difficult each year and for this reason nothing could be found in York for the 2009 AGM as intended, and another location was found after a lot of effort by Gavin. Do you agree that the location of the next event should still be decided (or at least planned) at the AGM?
   [undoubtedly we all have our favourite places in the UK, but please bear in mind that potential locations must be resolved well in advance according to a number of crucial criteria, including accessibility by public transport, finding the right size, cost and location of hotel, and it must be a place where there are more than one or two things to do or see during the weekend. For this reason suggestions for locations have been had to be backed up by good reasoning]
   Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

6. Would it be fairer for all members to decide on a location by voting on [say] two alternative choices suggested by members attending the AGM and published in pass?
   [bearing in mind the above criteria]
   Agree? Not sure? Disagree?
7. The club has been running for a number of years and so many (though definitely not all) major towns and cities in the UK have been used for Mastermind weekends at some point in its history. If there is a gap of several years the consensus seems to be that some places are worth going back to again (e.g. Cardiff, which was a big success and had changed a lot in the interim); do you agree with this policy?

Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
8. During the club weekends, in between the meals, the quiz and the AGM most of us attending these events do various things collectively or individually depending on how much we share and enjoy our many and various interests. Sometimes groups of us form to be shown the highlights or points of interest of a location by a member of the club who lives in the town or city or knows it well, or sometimes we have hired professional guides to do this. This has often been done on an improvised basis, but would you prefer more organised tours of a location or near attractions, for example by coach or bus? [bearing in mind that a significant proportion of attendees would have to agree to this to make it worthwhile and affordable]

Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

9. Not all of us are very mobile, either physically or in terms of car ownership. Although there are three club meals and the AGM itself that are usually within the same hotel that we all stay at, would you also like to have one or more events organised within the hotel, for example for the Saturday morning? [perhaps guest speakers or films relevant to the location. Again, bear in mind that a significant proportion of attendees would have to agree to this to make it worthwhile and affordable]

Agree? Not sure? Disagree?

10. Although none of the weekend events are obligatory for members attending (unless you’re a member of the committee), the usual format (for want of a better phrase) is that the annual gathering starts with people arriving on Friday, having a pre-booked club meal that evening, then there’s the main club meal and quiz on Saturday evening, and on Sunday morning we have the AGM itself followed by Sunday lunch, with various options before, after and in between that are decided on an ad-hoc basis. Is this format still a good idea? Accordingly, please indicate any of the viewpoints below that you agree with…

a. The Mastermind meals are a good idea and I enjoy the option.

b. Only the Saturday meal should be a club event, and we’d be better ‘doing our own thing’ on other days.

c. The AGM shouldn’t be on Sunday morning, but on_____________

d. Rather than centring on a weekend, weekdays would be better for the gathering and AGM.

e. The event should be held to coincide with public holidays.

TIME OF YEAR
11. For a number of reasons, until now a weekend around Easter has been chosen for the annual gathering and AGM. If you don’t agree with this, which time of year do you feel would be generally better?


MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVES
12. We all have different reasons for going or not going to the annual Mastermind gatherings. Please tick any of the following comments below that best describe your attitude, and please be honest here - don’t worry about hurting anyone’s feelings or think that you ought to write what’s expected of you. Truth is useful, and even kindly meant untruths aren’t. No one will hold it against you if you think badly of the status quo; this is what this questionnaire is all about. These weekends are central to the Mastermind Club’s life. It’s YOUR club – make the most of it!

a) I go to see places I’ve not seen before.

b) I go to see or make friends.

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c) I enjoy the weekend quiz.

d) I’m not interested in seeing most of the places the club goes to.

e) I have found that these events are boring [please tick this only if you’ve been at least once, and please say when or where you were there.]

f) I have the impression that the Mastermind Club weekend is a cliquey event.

g) I find the costs of attending Mastermind weekends are usually prohibitive.

h) I am put off going to Mastermind weekends if they’re in places that I’ve already been to.

i) I am put off going to Mastermind weekends if they’re in places that the club has already been to.

j) If there’s enough support within the club and it becomes viable, I would like to go to extra Mastermind weekends organised in various places around the UK. [if these do not involve an AGM it’s likely that these would be smaller events, but note - if you are in favour of this then you may have to be involved in its organisation]

k) If there’s enough support within the club and it becomes viable, I would like to go to extra Mastermind weekends organised in various places around outside of the UK. [if these do not involve an AGM it’s likely that these would be smaller events, but note - if you are in favour of this then you may have to be involved in its organisation. There are precedents for this - when members went to Dublin and Amsterdam]

YOUR VIEW
If none of the above questions adequately allow you to express your view clearly enough then please succinctly summarise your views on anything that you feel should or shouldn’t happen or be included at these Mastermind weekends.

A FINAL WORD
No one can guarantee that your views will be observed or acted upon, and although this is not a voting form, as such, a consensus on various issues will count in all future decisions. Also – hint hint – remember that you can make more of a difference by attending the club’s AGMs in person where you can address the committee directly. Meanwhile, please take the time to reply – you’ll be doing everyone a favour. Please send your views to the Editor (Ken Emond) by email to kene@britac.ac.uk or in hard copy to 108 Havil Street, Camberwell, London, SE5 7RS

Friends reunited…
Annual General Meeting 2008

Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Mastermind Club

Louis Room, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool: Sunday 5th April 2009

Gavin Fuller, Secretary

Apologies: Mary Andrews, Kenneth Barr, Alan Blackburn, Keith Bogle, Paul Campion, Barbara-Anne Eddy, David Edwards, Paul Emerson, Mary Gibson, Paul Henderson, Arfor Wyn Hughes, Morag Knox-Crawford, Josephine Lawrey, Rachel Leonard, Chris Pelly, Marga Scott-Johnson, Kate Vernon Parry, Martin Wyatt.

2008 AGM Minutes: The minutes of the 40th AGM at The Holiday Inn, Cardiff, on 6th April 2008 were passed nem con and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Treasurer’s Report: Susan Leng reported that in 2008 the Club had made a small profit of £129.05 and presented details of where money had come in and gone out in 2008, and also a comparison with 2007. Patricia Owen asked for clarification over the entry concerning “Overseas member’s hotel” – Susan explained that it had been necessary for the Club to pay Barbara-Anne Eddy’s hotel bill in Cardiff but she had already provided the money for the Club to do so and hence the money simply came in and out again but needed recording. Hazel Prowse asked why the income and expenditure for the Charity donation did not have a similar equilibrium – this was because in 2007 the Club had topped the amount up by £12 to make a round £450.

Tony Dart thanked Susan for her work as Treasurer.

PASS: Ken Emond thanked all the people who had sent in contributions to the magazine; indeed he had received more material than there was room to practicably publish. Ken also paid tribute to the printing firm Spindrift who were very helpful in ensuring the magazine was printed and distributed in a timely manner. Despite receiving a goodly amount of submissions he always welcomed new material and was particularly keen that attendees at the annual function wrote something, even if it was only a single sentence, about the weekend for pass to try and emphasise to the rest of the membership how enjoyable these events were. He had already been promised a full article and photos about the Blackpool weekend by Michael Davison. Margery Elliott asked whether the BBC received a copy of the magazine – this was confirmed.

Tony thanked Ken for his work as Editor, as pass was to a great extent the soul of the Club.

President’s Report: As Alan Blackburn was absent there wasn’t one, although Tony highlighted the increase in subscriptions as a key event of the previous year.

Membership Secretary’s Report: Peter Chitty reported that the change in the subscription fee meant it had been quite a year, particularly as only about half the membership had changed their standing orders to pay the new amount. Only a small proportion of those who had not done so had subsequently paid an extra £5 to complete their subscription, and Peter would write to the remaining 115 to try to encourage them to do so. On a happier note the alteration in subscription fee had led to a fall in cheque players as a significant proportion of these had switched to standing order. There was also a peculiar payment from somebody who did not appear to be a member and the banks very unable to trace, an I M Bayley. There were suggestions as to whom this might be, and as some people knew the likely candidate he would be contacted and asked.

Membership now stood at 382. Over the previous year there had been a rise in resignations to 16, 4 members had sadly died and 14 had failed to pay and had therefore been struck off the membership list.

Glensy Hopkins asked whether this increase in resignations was linked to the increase in the subscription – Peter said there was no evidence that this was the case. David Cowan felt that the problems with standing orders being changed or not might have been partly a result of inefficiency on the part of members’ banks and them not having enough time to process the changes. Sonia Anderson reported that she had been affected by this and there was other evidence people were aware of to back this supposition.
Tony thanked Peter for his work in what was something of a thankless task.

**Insignia:** Phillida reported that it had been a quiet year with only an occasional order. Matters were not helped by the fact that most members had already purchased all that they wanted of current stock, and that the average clothing size of the membership had been somewhat underestimated. There would be a fire sale of remaining stock to try and get rid of it. Nonetheless the Committee felt that new lines were still an option and were proposing that polo shirts with the Club logo could be purchased as the next item, probably in colours such as navy blue, red and white. This met with favour, although Rosemary James asked for clarification as to how big sizes such as large or xl actually were. Other ideas were also floated – Hazel suggested mugs, coasters or miniature whisky bottles, although Phillida pointed out the mugs had been explored before and had been deemed impracticable on the grounds trying to post them would more than likely lead to a significant proportion of breakages, whilst Glenys suggested canvas bags, Rosemary mouse pats, Stewart Cross key rings, Sonia tea towels although Michael Davison had from previous experience elsewhere found these were a slow seller and Geoff Thomas birthday/christmas cards with a Mastermind theme. Stewart thought that artworks could be adapted with the addition of a Mastermind Club t-shirt for such cards. Glenys pointed out that if consumable items that members might want to purchase on more than one occasion were produced then these might sell well as members came back for more. The Committee promised to explore options for new insignia.

**Club Charity:** The request for written submissions to the Secretary had brought none, although Ken Barr in a telephone call to him had proposed the Geoff Thomas Foundation, a leukaemia charity. Patricia Owen suggested the Smile Train, which operated on children with facial deformities in Asia and Africa. Rosemary was concerned that if the Club donated to charities of this ilk it would be pestered by requests for more money in the future but this was regarded by most as inevitable whatever charity was adopted. A vote was taken and the Smile Train was adopted by a clear margin of 15 votes to 9. The Committee wished to propose that in future the collection be made at dinner on the Saturday rather than at the AGM as more people tended to be present. Although this suggestion met with approval Pauline Wells asked for clarification as to how it would be decided which charity would be adopted before the dinner. pass would be used as a forum and means to encouraging votes, and as was pointed out by Margery that a lot of members did not contribute to the donation, it may even be than more contributions were received via the Charity being established in this way.

A kiss me quick hat was passed round and donations given which came to a total of £185.06.

**Annual Functions 2009 and 2010:** It was felt that the 2009 function had gone well despite a lower attendance than usual. David Cowan pointed out that rising hotel charges were a potential issue and Stewart wondered whether it may be necessary to revert to university accommodation although Tony pointed out there were issues with this sort of accommodation which is why hotels were preferred. Glenys Hopkins asked whether a questionnaire be produced to try and see what members wanted and increase the numbers attending - Gavin replied that the low numbers attending this year (less than 10% of the membership) had already led to this discussion and it was going to be done. Michael Davison felt that the lower numbers were possibly ironically responsible for it seeming a particularly friendly function, and Leo Stevenson said it was the craic that encouraged him to attend. Indeed the general feeling was that it was the people, not the place, that made the functions work. Gain was thanked for his work in putting the function together, which had proved particularly arduous for him.

For 2010 the prime candidate was Canterbury but Gavin had done some preliminary research and there was only one viable location to hold the function there – if that charged too much than he would have to look elsewhere. Brighton was floated as a potential back-up location, as were Winchester, Maidenhead (for Windsor) by Hazel, Broadstairs by Pauline, Southampton by Rosemary (which met with an unenthusiastic response from Gavin) and Bournemouth by Stewart. Stewart also wondered whether if the function was earlier in the year it might attract more members, although it was thought to be doubtful. Leo wondered whether it might be an idea to have multiple bases for a weekend, but Gavin was concerned that might have a centrifugal effect on things. A provisional date was set for the second weekend in April, although it would be left for Gavin to work out where would prove to be the best location in the South and that would be the best date to have it there in the end.

**Magnum Competition:** It was felt that this went well and the standard of questions had been good. The only problems had been a warm room, a couple of technical glitches on the audio-visual elements and the usual problem with microphones, people not using them enough and an resulting inability of some people to hear the answers.

**Magnum Finals:** Gavin reported that despite less attendees the number of submissions had actually gone up, with about two-thirds of the members present submitting an entry. There were 38 questions, and some statistical analysis showed that only 14 of these had been answered correctly by over half of the 22 submissions. Margery Elliott’s question was the only one answered correctly by everyone and she therefore won the easiest question prize, At the other end of the scale 2 questions were only...
answered correctly by the person who set them and one by only the setter and one other person – to try and deter such setting.

Gavin had implemented a new scoring system this year where those who set a question which nobody else could answer would be docked two points, and those where only one other person answered it correctly would be docked one point.

Scores ranged from 7.5 to 25.6. The team prize went to Pro Tem (Ken Emond, Phillida Grantham, Susan Leng and Anne Miller) who adopted the cunning stratagem of being the only team to submit an entry, whilst Mel Kinsey was a convincing winner of the individual prize and received the trophy from Peter Chitty. Second was Stewart Cross beating Kevin Ashman into third, for which he became the proud possessor of a box of Old Fart Fudge.

**Any other business:** None.

There being no further business, the Life Vice-President closed the meeting at 12.10.

### The Smile Train

**Susan Leng**

At the AGM of the Mastermind Club, Smile Train was voted as the Club Charity of 2009. The treasurer has sent off the proceeds of the collection from members who were present, totalling £185 which will pay for one child to have the operation. If you want to add your own donation, the address is: The Smile Train UK, PO Box 583, Northampton NN3 6UH, with cheques payable to ‘The Smile Train UK’

The Smile Train is one of the best-managed, cost-effective charities in the world. It is a non-profit organisation that is run as if ‘for-profit’. They manage and channel every pound raised to help the maximum number of children possible.

Over the past ten years, they have provided free cleft surgery for hundreds of thousands of children. These children were suffering not because they were born with a cleft, but because they were born too poor to ever afford surgery. Being born with a cleft in a developing country is truly a curse. In fact, every baby born in Uganda with a cleft is given the name Ajok which literally means ‘cursed by God’. And no one knows how many newborns with clefts are killed or abandoned right after birth. The ones who are lucky enough to find a Smile Train free cleft surgery programme, not only survive, they thrive. A 45-minute operation hands them back their future, and gives them a second chance at life that they never thought they’d get.

They save millions of pounds a year by using innovative technology such as digital patient charts and virtual surgery software to train medical teams, and have established the world’s first and largest digital cleft library. With a tiny staff of just 42 people, they manage thousands of partnerships and programmes in 75 of the world’s poorest countries. When you make a donation to The Smile Train, you don’t just get a good feeling; you also get an amazing return on your investment.

![The Blackpool Marathon was run on the same day as the AGM – read about Chris Pelly’s efforts to raise funds through another energetic activity on page 18](image)
2009 saw a slight increase in the number of entries to the Masterquiz with 41 people attempting at least one set, Phillida receiving 37 entries and me 38. The scores were higher this year, with some impressively high scores in particular on Phillida’s set. This year saw a distinctly Northern bias to the qualifiers, with only holder David Cowan, who won Phillida’s theme prize for Part 1 and Ken Emond coming from southern climes and even then Ken is an expat Scot! 2005 Mastermind Pat Gibson led the way, with two other champions in Geoff Thomas and Rosemary James also qualifying and a number of regular faces, plus a welcome new one in Hilary Forrest. Missing this year from the usual suspects was another former Mastermind in David Edwards, who just pipped Mike Formby for the In absentia prize.

Tony was happy to act as questionmaster again and Phillida helped as second scorer. Heat 1 saw Pat take on Rosemary and Hilary, Heat 2 paired last year’s winner David and runner-up Geoff with Philip Wharmby whilst Heat 3 saw Stewart Cross take on Anne Hegerty and Ken. Opening proceedings this year was a round on games which proved harder than I thought it would be, but a round on fish proved rather more straightforward as did the picture round of famous towers. Nineteenth century Art, Blackpool and a round on the seaside completed the first round, and scores soon became quite close. Pat was well clear with a top score of 20, Rosemary was solid in second with 15, Philip and Stewart each got 13 with Stewart having a particularly strong second half, Ken scored 12 whilst Geoff, David and Anne tied with 10 and necessitated the first tie break in 8 years. My historical dates proved quite tricky for them, but Anne saw off the other two to get the last semi-final place.

With the only two previous winners of the competition who had qualified both knocked-out in the tie-break it meant there would be a new name on the trophy this year, so all was to be played for. I took into account comments that there had been insufficient academic, highbrow questions of late and so there were rounds on Opera and Academia, with others on famous people with Blackpool connections, the weather, film and a music round of tunes played on the Wurlitzer organ. Philip and Rosemary got off to a slow start, but at half way only two points separated the other four. Philip then had a storming second half, Ken fell away and it was close coming into the final round between Anne, Pat and Stewart. Anne this time led the way into her first final with 17 and Pat just pipped Stewart by 14-13 to reach his second final; Stewart came third for the second year running with 13 and was left to rue what might have been.

The final kept to the pattern established last year, with two sets of paired questions bracketing the pot luck pictureboard. The first set of pairs proved close, with Pat edging it 14-13, and he then pulled away by taking the pictureboard round 18-10 and managing to surmount a couple of technical gremlins that unfortunately delayed a couple of the questions. I’ll try to prevent these next year! Anne tried her best on the final round but Pat was just too strong, prevailing 48-35 to take his first Magnum and make it now an elite band of five who have won both that and Mastermind itself.

David passed on the trophy to Pat, a worthy winner. Thanks to all nine who subjected themselves to the competition and indeed to all those who entered the Masterquiz – as ever it is great fun seeing what you answer to the questions. Who knows what next year will bring?
# Master Quiz 2009 Final Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pat Gibson</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geoff Thomas</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>David Edwards</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mike Formby</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stewart Cross</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chris Gonet</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anne Hegerty</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Neil Crockford</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raymond Kahn</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rosemary James</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Philip Wharmby</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>David Cowan</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ken Emond</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hilary Forrest</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Martin Wyatt</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ray Ward</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Kate Vernon Parry</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Michael Davison</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19=</td>
<td>Leslie Grout</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19=</td>
<td>David Humphrey</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Norman Izzett</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Paul Emerson</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Tim Westcott</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ann Kelly</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Anne Miller</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Christine Moorcroft</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Josephine Lawrey</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Margery Elliott</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Patricia Cowley</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>602</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Peter Todd</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Joseph Hand</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Wendy Forrester</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Hazel Prowse</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Barbara-Anne Eddy</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Chris Pelly</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Gordon Stuart</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Roger Smith</td>
<td>290</td>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Hadrian Jeffs</td>
<td>285</td>
<td></td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Eleanor Macnair</td>
<td>272</td>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Lance Haward</td>
<td>265</td>
<td></td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Ann Leaney</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those in bold italicised print qualify for the Magnum Final.
These are the questions submitted for this year’s Mugnum competition, for those who were not present in Blackpool to try their hand at answering. The answers will be printed in the next edition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>(Margery Elliott): Eight of the United States of America have names beginning with M. Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi and Missouri are six, name either of the other two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>(Patricia Owen): Blackpool scored a first for Britain in 1885 with what form of transport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>(Peter Richardson): Which post, often in the news, was held by Debby Reynolds between 2004 and 2007?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>(Pauline Wells): We are in Blackpool on the Lancashire coast but in which county is Blackpool Bridge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>(Hazel Prowse): What is measured on the Saffir-Simpson scale?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>(Rosemary James): Which author, more famous for another investigator, wrote a series of detective stories featuring George Felse, his wife Bunty and son Dominic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>(Ray Ward): Of which country is Graham Bell Island a part?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>(Tony Dart): What outdated material was deliberately used to build Blackpool’s North Pier in 1863?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>(Leslie Grout): New Zealand has four, China five, Australia six and the USA 50. What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287</td>
<td>(Phillida Grantham): Who said on TV &quot;I don't have any guilty pleasures because pleasure is something you should never feel guilty about&quot;?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>(Chris Hughes): What was the name of Peter Tinniswood’s BBC comedy series of the 1970s centred on Uncle Mort and the Brandon family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342</td>
<td>(Michael Davison): The ‘captive flying machines’, one of the oldest attractions of Blackpool’s Pleasure Beach, were designed by a man who gave his name to a famous invention of an entirely different kind. Who was he?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349</td>
<td>(Norman Izzett): Who was the Blackpool player who was the first English footballer to be knighted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>394</td>
<td>(Bob Foulkes): What record in the natural world is held by the isotope Tellurium-128?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>443</td>
<td>(Ann Kelly): Which Briton was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1943?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>455</td>
<td>(Kevin Ashman): Central Paris is divided into a number of districts called arrondissements, spiralling out from the city centre. How many are there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>457</td>
<td>(Peter Chitty): In which film did Clifton Webb play John Philip Sousa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475:</td>
<td>(Stewart Cross): In which city does the Moselle join the Rhine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>496:</td>
<td>(Anne Hegerty): With one exception, all the Queens of England from 1066 to 1154 had the same name. What was it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>526</td>
<td>(Wendy Forrester): Which fictional detective solved the case of the poisoned caterpillars?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>549</td>
<td>(Philip Wharmby): What did Blackpool pioneer for Great Britain in 1909?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>579</td>
<td>(Anne Miller): What do seasiders and tangerines have in common?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>596</td>
<td>(Hilary Forrest): Which US President served the shortest time in office?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>642</td>
<td>(Arfor Wyn Hughes): what links Boris Karloff and Quentin Crisp?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>672</td>
<td>(Patricia Cowley): apart from the fact they were all US Presidents, what links George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>687</td>
<td>(Glenys Hopkins): What do the following numbers have in common: 1, 2, 7, 9, 70, 71, 80 &amp; 81?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
692 (Peter Todd): Which famous rock musician grew up in Blackpool and was educated at the local grammar school?

696 (Ken Emond): 4th April 2009 is the 60th anniversary of the signing of the treaty bringing into being which organisation?

731 (Gavin Fuller): What did Harry Corbett purchase for 7s 6d on Blackpool’s North Pier in 1948?

766: (Geoff Thomas): Who used the phrase “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously” to show that individual parts of an utterance should connect semantically, as well as syntactically, to be deemed “acceptable”?

769 (David Cowan): Why did the first woman elected to the House of Commons never take her seat?

819 (Mel Kinsey): a team of “Little Masters” formed which club, playing cricket on their half day off?

824 (Sonia Anderson): What flows eastward at a rate of up to 150 million cubic metres per second?

866 (Leo Stevenson): Name the artist who painted pictures known as “The Tempest”, “The Three Philosophers” and “Sleeping Venus”

869 (Susan Leng): Which iconic Victorian building in Blackpool was ravaged by fire on 15th February 2009?

955 (Paul Emerson): Stephen Blackpool is a leading character in which Charles Dickens novel?

986 (Pat Gibson): Which performer was described by George W Bush as “The greatest threat to American children since Polio”?

988 (Barry Simmons): Who is the son of Indra and the chief hero of the Mahabharata?

Master Quiz 2009

Phillida Grantham provides the answers to Round 1 of this year’s Master Quiz.

Thank you to all who entered Part 1 of the quiz. There were more of you this year than for some time, and the standard was commendably high – I never cease to marvel at the vast knowledge you have tucked away! The in absentia prize was won by David Edwards, and the most colourful personality was David Cowan. Congratulations to you both.

1. Halifax Bank of Scotland
2. International Monetary Fund
3. The Masters Golf at Augusta
4. Yellowish light
5. Zadok the Priest
6. Wadebridge
7. Mendelssohn
8. A duck
9. A butterfly
10. Chelsea Football Club
11. Serving and advising on wine in a restaurant
12. All have hosted the Summer Olympic Games
13. Bruce Forsyth, assisted by Tess Daly
14. The red deer
15. Purple with a yellow centre
16. “The shot heard round the world” was fired, possibly accidentally, at Lexington, and it started the American War of Independence
17. Liquid, solid, gas
18. Going My Way
19. Rosso (-a,-i,-e)
20. If Pluto has been demoted, it is now Neptune
21. Robert Kubica
22. Sugar
23. Norman Stubblefield invented the forerunner of the mobile phone
24. Black and white stripes (hence, “The Magpies”)
25. Parallel Olympics
26. Southampton, some joining them from Holland
27. The Rite of Spring
28. Those who have lost something
29. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London
30. Chester
31. The 39 Steps
32. Green
33. The Isle of Sheppey
34. The Horse Racing Authority
35. Large hats adorned with black feathers
36. Objects carved by sailors from whale tusks
37. Dublin Bay prawns
38. John Adams
39. Angelsey
40. Yellowstone
41. Dundee, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow
42. The Yorkshire Dales
43. Deja-vu
44. Purple Heart
45. Ukraine
46. Humoresque, Opus 101, number 7, by Dvorak
47. Ed Balls
48. The Crab
49. A swimming pool which, by an optical illusion, appears to blend into the sea beyond
50. Quicklime
51. There are many and everybody correctly named at least one: Bury St Edmunds, Blackburn, Brighton, Chelmsford…
52. Blackpool
53. Blue
54. The Black Forest
55. Mo
56. They fall
57. Red hair
58. 8
59. Amazing Grace (Judy Collins)
60. Victor Hugo
61. The horn should not be sounded when stationary on the road nor when driving in a built-up area between the hours of
   11.30pm and 7am. It should never be sounded aggressively, only to warn other road users of your presence
62. Stonehenge
63. Argentina
64. Your little finger
65. Queen Margaret, Heriot-Watt, Edinburgh and Napier
66. Turkey
67. Daily newspaper
68. The battle of Flodden
69. Electricité de France
70. Hull
71. Prague
72. Greenfinch
73. Silver
74. The Financial Times
75. 518 feet high
76. Open your eyes (mince pies)
77. Tokyo
78. Multicoloured sands
79. A white rose on a blue background
80. Blue and violet
81. Isambard Kingdom Brunel
82. Tin
83. Barrow
84. Barbara Windsor
85. From the first public flush toilets at the Great Exhibition of 1851, which cost one penny to use them
86. From the colour of the facings on their uniform
87. Ox blood
88. All were expelled from an educational establishment: Rugby, Dartmouth, University College Oxford, Farnborough Hill Convent
89. Alexandre Dumas
90. Fertility (IVF)
91. Shocking Pink
92. The tea bag
93. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Waste (Colloquially known as “Minister for Rubbish”)
94. From the Crown and Anchor pub, where lobbyists for an assay mark outside London used to meet
95. Trying to obtain bank details over the phone in order to empty an account
96. Mood Indigo
97. Whistler
98. Caroline Lucas
99. A rainbow
100. Lionel Barrymore

The top three in the Mugnum are congratulated by Gavin (who wears his snazzy Kiss Me Quick hat!)
Slipping the Surly Bonds of Earth

Chris Pelly

Always up for a challenge, be it physical or cerebral, I planned last year to mark 2009, the year of my Big Seven, with something that would guarantee an adrenaline rush and - more important - help raise some money for charity.

There are however certain activities, grossly euphemised as hazardous, that constitute definite no-nos in my book. Bungee-jumping for instance. The consequences of erroneous computation are too awful to contemplate. Even if one all (seemingly) goes well the chance remains of a detached retina. Spelunking ? Not on your life. The mere thought of squeezing through narrow rock tunnels is enough to induce claustrophobia, for I've heard tell that in moments of panic the human frame expands. Winter sports then ? Far too risky to life and limb. I'd no more don a pair of skis than take up folk-dancing or apply for French citizenship.

One ambition I've secretly nurtured is to make a (non-emergency) parachute descent. Whenever cocooned in the pressurised security of an aircraft at cruising altitude, I'm given to fantasising about that blue uncluttered wonderland around, envying those early balloonatics whose brief was no more than to "test the air temperature and make philosophical observations" Till recently however my only aerial ventures had consisted of a maritime paraglide in Tunisia; and a rather prosaic abseil from the balloon moored in Bournemouth Gardens, which, thanks to some overzealous harnessing, left me with a sore groin for nigh on a month.

When I broached the subject to my wife Brenda, I expected her response to be a rather salty version of Mr Punch's Advice To Those About To Marry. In fact, she expressed herself all for it, generously offering to make a skydive -and they don't come cheap -my 70th birthday present. Was she trying to tell me something..? We decided that in lieu of giving presents, family members might care to make a donation to the Margaret Green Animal Sanctuary near Corfe Castle.

I contacted the Army Parachute Association at Netheravon, near Salisbury, the oldest venue in the UK and the nearest to Poole. The APA is primarily a military organisation but accepts civilian parachute students. No upper age limit providing one can produce on jump-day a comprehensive Declaration of Fitness form and Doctor's Certificate duly signed and stamped. Solo jumps for over 55's are restricted to ex-pros. This intelligence came as a disappointment as it would mean going tandem strapped to an instructor throughout the aircraft ride and parachute descent.

If I anticipated nothing more than a shared, dream-slow fall to earth under a generous canopy, I was soon disabused; for I'd failed to read the sheets of bumph properly and found that tandem jumps take place from an altitude of 13000 feet, with 50 seconds of freefall preceding a 5-minute canopy ride. The prospect of the (mandatory) freefall component certainly concentrated the mind. Anyway, reckoning that a fine day in midwinter here is as likely as at any other time of year, I booked a slot for a morning in late January and took up the option to have the whole proceedings videoed !

The great day came and we set off under leaden skies (no wind, thankfully) reaching Netheravon at 8am. After lengthy ID checks at the guardroom, proceeded to Airfield Camp for signing in. By this time a fine drizzle had started and prospects didn't look too promising. However, we had been told to be prepared to spend all day at the camp and that every effort would be made to get us into the air.

An instructor came along, introduced himself and took a group of us into the Parachute Room for ground-training. This consisted of a video followed by a half-hour briefing. I'm not sure how relevant the video was in the circumstances : teams of skypeople debouching from the cavernous belly of a freighter, forming a circle, clasping hands and performing a sort of ethereal ring'o roses. Gravity seemed to have ignored them. Spectacular stuff, though ! Something to aspire to... The talk focused on landing procedures for tandems - keep legs extended in front, lean back, and make sure your bum hits terra firma first. Hit the ground running and you're liable to be thrown forward onto your face by the impetus of the person behind, who of course is still airborne.

We kicked our heels for a good couple of hours, wondering if our journeys would be wasted. But there seemed a sudden luminousness behind the thin cloud, so... Then over the PA came news of a weather window opening and that our group should get kitted up and assemble outside in a sort of pen to await transport to the aircraft.

18 pass
I boarded the Cessna Caravan with Phil, my Tandem Master (to use the jargon), a man much given to black humour: "Keep your legs close together on ground impact then you'll be easier to fit into a coffin.." I parried with wince-inducing remarks along the lines of "The parachute store suited me down to the ground" and "Are we on the Salisbury plane?"

Take off, with eight people squatting on the floor of this flying sardine-tin. Fifteen minutes till we reach Drop Zone. Yes, I experienced a few butterflies, but nothing, positively nothing, to that icy fear when awaiting the Black Chair in a Mastermind semi-final. As we climbed to our 13000 ft ceiling, various individuals exited (here apologies to Lance Haward for verbalising a noun) with the nonchalance of stepping off a bus. They were the photographers.

Suddenly there was a sinister change to the engine note. A thump in the ribs from Phil. "Shuffle to the exit and tuck your legs under the aircraft. Remember: head back, arms crossed on chest and SMILE FOR CANDID CAMERA!"

About five seconds poised at the edge. Then a mighty blast of air as we went out and down; ears exploding from the change of ambient pressure; tumbling head-over-heels, it seemed, in a gigantic waterfall, tossed this way and that. The release of a small drogue gradually steadied things and enabled us to adopt the spreadeagle position. We were still accelerating and soon reached a terminal velocity of about 120mph. A reverberating CRACK! as the main 'chute was deployed. Then the brisk deceleration of 8g swung us up, round, and over again. The subsequent canopy ride was rather anticlimactic, though Phil had one or two stomach-churning tricks up his canopy!

As for my landing, Dr Johnson's observation about a dog walking on its hind legs seems particularly apposite. Maintaining an 'L'-shape for the approach proved uncomfortable. But no excuses. Nul points. Down in one piece, anyway, which was a relief to Brenda, whose main concern, she later admitted, was the possibility of having to forego our fortnight in Madeira beginning the following week.

Thus ended one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life. An appropriate postscript (with a little latitude) might be the opening lines from High Flight by John Gillespie Magee: "Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth /And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings."

Would I do it again? Most definitely - but not yet (to echo St Augustine). Give it ten years. Always assuming of course that by then I'll still be on, rather than in, terra firma.
“...or What’s a Passport for?”

Lance Haward

Notwithstanding his self-confessed shortcoming in archaeological enthusiasm, as myself an archaeology nut I find Bernard Howell’s speculation about the travel mind-set (pass, 2009:1) a very familiar one in two aspects.

That business of the impact of a long-anticipated site, for one. My experience is that it is always the case that however familiar at second-hand the image of the that place has been, perhaps even from childhood with one’s first dip into the first archaeology primer, as with his entry into Macchu Picchu there’s always some dimension of discovery in the moment. An angle, a nuance, a trick of the light or subtlety of the site’s fragrance, or its particular setting against the mountain backdrop, this is the unexpected detail that renders the once distantly familiar suddenly new. From which two things result. First, one is able to take photographs uniquely one’s own, recording this personal vision as something different from all the thousands of familiar photographs which one had expected to have laid claim to the site and exhausted its creative possibilities. And secondly, that original mental image, conceivably a picture of over fifty years’ standing as my own of Angkor, is changed for ever by the encounter with the reality. I have many a time attempted to re-envisage that childhood fascination with the likes of Knossos, Mykinai, Delphi or Sigiriya. But though it may come back in brief, subliminal flashes, a haunting tantalization of something stolen by time and prosaic reality, it is now an unfixed image, a fugitive colour, which every such revisit renders steadily more precarious, because the original is no longer available for comparison. Like exposing an ancient photograph to too much light. Like sex – no good trying too hard. With the passage of time, repetition doesn’t come too easily.

The impact of this moment of revelation is at its most potent when it concerns one of those places that loom enormous in the background of every educated human being. Part of our daily language. Stepping into the ruined shell of some site that’s on the frontiers between history and fiction has the capacity to jolt the psyche to its depths, transporting one with total recognition into the landscape of one’s most deeply embedded communal memory. To step out of the present moment into legend. Thus at Knossos, at Troy, at Mykinai, where it’s possible to believe for a moment that one is wandering through the very incidents of Homer. Not without reason did Kenneth Tynan describe Mykinai as “Macbeth country”, a neat trick, catching in that transposition the force of metaphor, that by harnessing one image to another, alien one, reinforces both. Walking up through the Lion Gate at Mykinai, or sitting above the fragments of the Skaean Gate at Troy to read the account of Hektor’s flight across this Skamander Plain at one’s feet, can one bring anyone versed in our common, venerable culture close to emotional breakdown.

Bernard’s other evocative thought is that footnote about the travel hit-list. I’m off in his footsteps later this autumn, to tick off Peru myself, that from this romantic distance has always seemed to me, in both its topography and its history, perhaps the most beautiful country on earth. That’s the extent of the treasure I shall be putting at risk. In my case, the single highlight is not going to be the Macchu Picchu of every back-packer’s romanticizing dream, but the spa town of Caxamaica where Pixarro deceived, dismantled in a revolution at the end of a mere three years’ reign. And from that point on, the tricky question which Bernard touches on is: what next on – that is, off – the list? Over a methodical half-century, bureaucratic to a fault, I’ve “done” Nemrut Dag’ and Tiryms, Angkor, Samarkand and Bukhara, Montsegur and Paestum, Tel-el Amarna and Mistra, Nineveh, Dunsinane, Chichen Itza and Karnak, Famagusta and Herculaneum – in sum, a very sizeable percentage of my A-list targets. Of the prime magnitude stars, only Alamut and Serebrinkarahissar remain. You won’t know this last: the place where Byzantine Emperor-to-be, Andronikos II Kommenos, one of the real “characters” of medieval history, who passed a life extraordinary enough to have been immortalized in opera (though I don’t believe any composer has) set up his headquarters as a brigand-king before going on to more solid imperial things, living an adulterous, Arabian Nights fantasy with the exotic, abducted royal fiancée, Theodora, prior to being hideously dismantled in a revolution at the end of a mere three years’ reign.

Well, I have tracked the Colonea of Runciman’s chronicle down to Serebrinkarahissar in northern Anatolia. I can give you the co-ordinates of it. It’s not inaccessible by hired car. Neither Alamut in the Iranian province of Rudbar, the mountain fastness of

20 pass
Rashid-ed-Din Sinan, the “Old Man of the Mountains”, and his proto-Assassins. Notwithstanding all the difficulties that phobic Iranian revolutionaries put in the way of today’s travellers, that one is actually on the itineraries of Explore of some other of these helpful packagers.

So. The Howell question is: after Caxamaica, do I go for one more – two more – and make a bid to complete this game of patience? Or do I rather observe Browning’s sensible warning, “Aye, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp...”? Squander the dream, or hang on to the last of it? Even if “what heaven is for” is something more than just rounding off a small geographical task left unfinished in this life, I feel that one’s declining years should not be frantically occupied with this hubris, but left still faintly illuminated by some last glow from all those childhood images which one has been relentlessly extinguishing.

** As I understand it, the term “Inca” can legitimately be employed to designate the ruling class in Quechuan Peru, by analogy with that of the true Spartans as rulers of Lakonia. The distinguishing title of the monarch appears to have been the “Spa (“Supreme”?) Inca

Coda, by the Editor

Ken Emond

Like Lance, I too was very taken with Bernard Howell’s question regarding what Lance terms, the “prime magnitude stars”. I am sure that many members of the Club may want to contribute their own thoughts on these matters, but having restricted my editorial ramblings to a very short paragraph, I hope you will all forgive me indulging in my own additional thoughts on the subject, if only to provoke more response.

Unlike Bernard and Lance, my own ambitions are somewhat restricted and very modest indeed in comparison. I have no particular enthusiasm to see Peru, India, China, Egypt, indeed many of those A-list places that could be expected to feature in so many people’s lists. I have seen the pictures, and accept entirely what Lance says about the “dimension of discovery” in the moment of experiencing a place only previously known from photographs for the first time in person. But, somehow, for me my enthusiasm is not fired with such a spirit of adventure.

My own A-list places that I have been lucky enough to visit include the CN Tower in Toronto and the Sky Tower in Auckland; Boston, Massachusetts (one of the best city centres in my limited experience of the world for tourists), the Niagara Falls, Cologne Cathedral and the thermal hot springs around Rotorua. Closer to home I would include the wild fastness of the Dingle Peninsula and the bleak Great Blasket Island, windswept in the Atlantic off Ireland’s western shore, Dublin, and Orkney, with its collection of prehistoric sites including Skara Brae, Maes Howe and the Ring of Brodgar.

And places I have still to see – well, high on my wish list are places like the Giant’s Causeway and the Burren in Ireland, Paris (yes, I am ashamed to admit I have never seen Paris...), Athens and other historic sites of Greece, Rome, Malta, the Hebrides, Cornwall. The list, of course, could be endless. You would never guess at my interest in history, would you?

So come on, I am sure other members of the Club would like to contribute their own thoughts on this. What would turn out to be the most popular A-list place among us? It would be wonderful to find out, if you want to send me your thoughts.
The AGM

One of the many delights of - Blackpool – the Blackpool tram…
The size of the entry for this crossword was much more encouraging, possibly even record-breaking, including several offerings from first-timers. In fact, the winning tie-break entry came from a member who, if I remember correctly, has never submitted an entry before: Andy Burrows. My congratulations to him. A £10 book token should already have drifted his way. Andy’s clue to elicit the answer CRYBABY was: Shout to girlfriend: “Nancy!” Short, to the point, and a little bit un-PC: just what I like!

For the tie-break to Crossword 2009:2 (next page), entrants are invited to suggest an alternative clue to 6 down.

As usual, completed entries, including tie-break clue, should be submitted in any form to David Edwards by email to gadfan@btinternet.com or by post to 26 Lady Meadow Close, Denstone, Uttoxeter, ST14 5EY, to arrive by 31 August – a month later than the deadline for pass contributions this time.

Good luck!
Prize Crossword (2009:2)

by Gadfan

ACROSS
1 Mince came in film (6)
4 Nothing to add if a “red rag” reaction’s a driver’s fault (4,4)
9 Worthy barmaid to be employed by the French (9)
11 Chaos presented perversely as fun (5)
12 People acknowledge the Queen to be in charge of the nation (6,9)
13 Fragment of shattered iron pot (7)
15 Teach inappropriate use for chisel (5)
17 Offensive outburst (5)
19 Not a blackbird but fifty-one baked in a pie (7)
21 A deer of mine being restrained sounds deeply distressing to me (8,2,5)
23 First class return to take in a little business at holiday destination (5)
24 Court bans reform and he opposes it (9)
25 After prolonged engagement Heather’s laughing (8)
26 The neck to divide and rule (6)

DOWN
1 Epic play performed at smoker (4,4)
2 Desert coming back from demob? I’m a noncombatant (5)
3 Rifle compound to find a drink (7,8)
5 Of the main company returns, a nice breakdown (7)
6 Oh! Sue! Dive! (10,5)
7 Emotionless alien held in a way responsible (9)
8 Ex-Head cracks jokes while giving kits out (6)
10 Bronze crest over end of mansion (5)
14 Remedy for lawn reportedly dying back (9)
16 Moved into office this month on date arranged (8)
18 As it is also written, Sun and Moon take up unusual alignment for a season (7)
19 Dance shoes enable faster taps (5)
20 Going with the flow? On the contrary (6)
22 By tradition, said to be no more than two thousand and nine years old (5)

Gadfan
Home Sweet Home Quiz Answers and Result

Patricia Cowley

There was a gratifying entry of 12 for this quiz, with 3 all-correct responses, so I pulled them out of a hat, and the lucky winner was Paul Emerson, who receives the book token. The other all-correct answers were from Sonia Anderson and Margery Elliott:

Results:
Paul Emerson 30
Sonia Anderson 30
Margery Elliott 30
Hazel Prowse 29
Raymond Kahn 28
Christine Moorcroft 28
Kate Vernon-Parry 28
Gery Bramall 26
Barbara-Anne Eddy 26
Timothy Robey 26
Joseph Hand 19
Philip Sampey 18

Thanks and congratulations to everyone. I feel this quiz was possibly too easy – but I promise the next one will be more challenging!

Answers:
1. Lady Catherine de Bourgh (Pride and Prejudice)
2. Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh
3. Duke and Duchess of Devonshire
4. Sherlock Holmes
5. Marquess of Northampton
6. Helen Graham
7. Charles Dickens
8. Lily Dale
9. George Washington
10. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Prime Minister’s gift (the exact answer, as supplied by Gery Bramall. As most people gave the present occupier as the answer, so I accepted that as correct. John Prescott, after all, could have got the sack!)
11. Tony Hancock
12. Princess Anne
13. Sir Walter Scott
14. Winston Churchill
15. The Starkadder family
16. Akhenaton/Nefertiti
17. Owl (or Wol)
18. The Sitwell family
19. Maxim de Winter/Rebecca
20. The answer I had in mind was Emma Woodhouse (in Emma), which astonishingly nobody got. But almost everyone gave A.A. Milne, which I confess I didn’t know, but which, of course, I accepted
21. Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson
22. The President of the USA – it is the White House
23. Anne Shirley
24. Rupert Brooke, or Jeffrey Archer
25. Katharine Hepburn
26. William Morris
27. General Tilney and family
28. Beatrix Potter
29. William Wordsworth
30. Harry Potter/the Dursley family
I have compiled a little literary quiz for inclusion in PASS. It is first lines from 20 books. I offer a £15 voucher of the winner’s choice for the first correct or most correct answers.

Either by post to
Mel Kinsey, 11 Hollings Lane, Ravenfield, Rotherham S65 4PU

or by email to melpgs@aol.com (I used to work for Park Gate Recreational Services)

Name the book.

1. “A few miles south of Souldad, the Salinas river drops in close to the hill-side bank and runs deep and green. “

2. “It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen”

3. “Night is generally my time for walking”

4. “The airplane plop-plopped down the runway to a halt before the big sign ‘WELCOME TO CYPRUS’”

5. “Call me Ishmael”

6. “Well, Prince so Genoa & Lucca are now just family estates of the Bounapartes.”

7. “Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents, grumbled Jo, lying on the rug”.

8. “The family of Dashwood has long been settled in Sussex“.

9. “The village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of western Kansas, a lonesome place other Kansans call “out there”.

10. “The drought has lasted now for 10 million years, and the reign of the terrible lizards had long since ended “

11. “Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again”.

12. “When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow

13. “If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you will probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like”

14. “I have just returned from a visit to my landlord”

15. “These two very old people are the father and mother of Mr.Bucket

16. “Lt. Commander Peter Holmes of the Royal Australian Navy woke soon after dawn”

17. “There were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmond and Lucy”

18. “Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress

19. “Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically”

20. “Robert Langdon awoke slowly”