

RETIREE NEWS

A Biannual Publication for Retirees of all Chevron UK Companies



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Editor's Chat

Rain, rain and more rain and very mild weather; what an awful November, December and the start of January with so many storms and floods. What a treat when January turned drier and colder as winter should be. February started off very mild and wet then finished on a cold snap with frost, the weather is really mixed up. However, it was great to see Snowdrops, Crocus some blossom and beautiful Daffodils; to me, their trumpets are the heralding in of spring, a lovely season to bring forth fresh growth and colour. Hopefully, you all survived winter (not my favourite season) and now coming into summer. Have you any plans? Could they become articles for Retiree News? I am always on the lookout for stories whether it be about your career in the oil business, family, hobbies or travel etc. Don't make me beg!! It is, after all, your Retiree News, I just put it together and enjoy reading the articles received over the past years. Till next time, enjoy the summer.

My Time in TOT and Beyond

Paul Donaldson

I have been meaning to email you for so long and having just read the opening statement of the November 2023 issue of Retiree News, I have put together the following.

I too started my career in Texaco via TOT; joining in September 1978 on the Engineering Apprentice scheme, aka Engineer Cadetship. I was 'recommended' to apply for a cadetship by the illustrious Capt. Wallace (Wally) McCullough. He and my father were both founding members of a local lodge in Crawfordsburn; say no more!

I transferred shoreside in 1983 to the role of Shift Supervisor in Carrickfergus (Maurice (*my other half Ed*), will remember the depot well, under the direction of Ken Hewitt. I do recall at one stage being called late one evening by the local constabulary to inform me that one of our company vehicles, i.e. a company car, had been stolen and was available for collection in Davis Flats. I believe Maurice had the pleasurable duty of collecting his car that evening!

Carrickfergus was doomed once a new security fence was constructed around the site; as happened to many corporate businesses in Carrickfergus; Courtaulds, to name but one. The RTWs were latterly based in Belfast and Carrick closed. I transferred to Knightsbridge in October 1990 in the role of coastal shipping coordinator. Many years, and many roles later, I received a company car. I was first given a red automatic Ford Mondeo which was previously driven by YOU! (*He means me, and I remember the car! Ed*)

Years rolled by and in October 2015 I was made redundant, aka retired, from active service. Deciding not to sit around and do nothing I decided in my infinite wisdom to apply for an HGV licence and after passing my Class 2 (Rigid HGV) in January 2016 went on to pass my HGV Class 1 (Articulated) in March 2016. I now work as a driver for a firm based in Tilbury on a zero-hours contract basis, covering holidays and sickness. I enjoy the work, maybe not so much the early starts!

Thanks John, good to pass on memories. Ed!



More Memories

Peter Franklin

I was working on the Gloster Meteor Fighters of 74 Squadron at RAF Horsham St Faiths when I noticed our Senior Chief Technician (Chiefy) doing his rounds with the inevitable clipboard and looking more intensely than usual at various personnel including myself. "My office," he said. What on earth have I done? raced through my mind. "Sit down". "Yes Chief." He opened with questions as to why I wasn't on flying training having passed all the aircrew exams and medical, too long a story to bore you with here. More questions followed and then a warning that from then on, the conversation and any ensuing events were in strict confidence. He then told me to prepare for a short "overseas" trip and to discuss this conversation with no one but himself or the C/O. Any breach of this order would be dealt with as an offense under the Official Secrets Act - so something serious then.

A small detachment of us made up of at least one man of every trade and our NCOs boarded a Hastings transport plane together with our C/O and half a dozen or so pilots with no idea of where we were going. The C/O told us - shouted to us at the top of his voice - that all would be revealed when we landed at RAF Aldergrove now Belfast Airport in Northern Ireland. Although deafened by the noise from four radial piston engines the C/O conducted a briefing meeting reminding us that under the Official Secrets Act what would transpire was to be kept to ourselves and discussed with no one but himself and that included other members of the party. No one had any idea what we were going to do but the inclusion of the pilots was significant.

After disembarking at Aldergrove we settled into our billets and then all had our evening meal together. We were loaded into Land Rovers and set off into the night. In the dim light of the shrouded headlights, I thought I could make out trees and some tall thin structures. We stopped and were ordered to be quiet and form a line alongside the Land Rovers. The next order was to have our ID cards (F1250) out ready for inspection, keep quiet and stand still. In the dark someone dropped his F1250, cursed and bent down to try to find it. "Stand Still" a voice roared out from a PA loudspeaker. Too late, the movement must have triggered some sort of security device and we were blasted with a wall of ferocious light that seared our eyeballs. Pandemonium ensued, the air turned blue as curses and expletives rang out and somebody yelled in agony as our eyes were wide open in the dark it really felt like we had been hit in the face. Mercifully the arc lights were dimmed and as the red holes in our vision slowly started to fade our surroundings became clear.

We were surrounded by service personnel. A contingent of RAF Police with their dogs which were now barking furiously and what seemed like half the RAF Regiment some of whom were armed. Realisation dawned, we were in IRA territory, hence all the security. We were in a wood, the tall structures were the arc-lamp poles and in the background, I could see the outlines of some type of J hangars. These looked like huge Nissen huts with the typical curved roof but were not as solid and spacious as the type C hangars at Horsham. When order was restored, we were formed up and led to the personnel entry hangar doors which, after more security checks, opened to reveal a very busy and brightly lit scene. The place was packed tight with very sleek-looking aircraft gleaming in a very attractive light blue finish reminiscent of PR Spitfires. These I realised



were Supermarine Swifts, rivals of the Hawker Hunter for the RAF Fast Jet Interceptor Role. There were technicians swarming all over them with the Supermarine crew looking like test pilots in white overalls with SUPERMARINE emblazoned in brilliant blue letters across their shoulders. RAF crew were wearing indestructible denims in a somewhat indescribable greeny/brown colour. We were called forward by trades and shown the relevant equipment by either RAF or Supermarine crews. We were delighted at the prospect of our ageing Meteors being replaced by these state-of-the-art aircraft but had to keep our thoughts to ourselves. Any conversation had to be restricted to technical questions only.

We were in the NAAFI one evening having a few pints when an unfamiliar face appeared. He made his way over to our table and asked if he could join us to which we readily agreed. After some small talk, he asked what we thought of our little trip the other night. "Bit of a surprise" one of our crew replied. Before he could say any more, I kicked his shins under the table and looking as innocent as I could I replied "What trip"? "You know that excursion to those hangars in the woods," he said. "What hangars"? I replied. By now my colleagues had cottoned on and our visitor realised we all knew what he was up to. He looked at me and said "Well done." He then told us he was a security officer and was testing our ability to keep secret what we had experienced.

Unfortunately, the Swift had many problems and only a few RAF squadrons were equipped with it before the contract was cancelled. The Hawker Hunter became the mainstay interceptor of RAF Fighter Command including 74 Squadron.

From the various articles you have sent over the past months, it would appear you had a great career in the RAF. Ed!

Gone Underground

Nick Burrell

Whilst still in my twenties, Gulf asked me to join NWO, the NATO Wartime Oil Organisation. NWO, formed in the late 1950s, was made up of representatives from the oil industry, the military, and government entities. Members were advised not to divulge details to others. In the event of serious hostilities, NWO would be sent underground, with family members left exposed to the potential effects of any nuclear war.

Periodic meetings were held in a NATO country. Of all the interesting locations in Europe, the first meeting I attended was held at a hotel near Gatwick, and within walking distance of where I used to live. However, the one held in late 1984 was outside Ottawa.

I had a few hours for sightseeing when I first arrived in Quebec. Whilst walking through a park I noticed a black squirrel. My initial thoughts were that the poor creature was coated in oil. I then saw a few more similar ones, so I asked someone about the squirrels, and they advised that black squirrels were the norm.

My Career in Texaco

June McCullough

I did not quite make a quarter century at Texaco, but during the years spent working for the company, I met a lot of very good people both inside and outside the company. It all began in July 1971 when I started working with Bob Addiscott, the Comptroller, not the easiest person to work with; after a year he had had enough of me and I moved on to work for Peter Dodd in Industrial Marketing. A lovely boss and those in the department were all friendly. During my time



in this area, I got to know people in Research and Development, Retail and Commercial markets. After a few years, I moved to TOT working for Peter Howells. The people in the department were friendly and I learned a lot about shipping. However, I found that I was not stimulated by the work and heard about an opening in International Marine Sales (IMS).

My interview with David Cheyne was quite something, we hit it off immediately and I knew he would be a good boss, which he certainly was. It took a few weeks to be released from TOT and after making a fuss with Human Resources, I moved to 199 Knightsbridge and enjoyed getting to know everyone in the office, plus the many European and American members of staff within IMS.

David gave me the chance to move into a more administrative role and eventually, I started to feel a little stale and was contacted by Petronella Seccombe in Public Affairs to see if I would be interested in working with her.

My last ten years in this department were very varied. We received lots of requests for donations to charities and sometimes items from the 'goody' cupboard were donated for them to use as raffle prizes. One item that could never be allowed to run out was golf balls as we received lots of requests from in-house members who were involved in customer hospitality and of course a round of golf.

At one time we ran a school technical competition and the prize was a trip to our Tartan Platform. I accompanied the three winners and when we got to Aberdeen airport, guess whose luggage did not turn up? Yes, mine! John Campbell met us at the airport and was kind enough to ask me what I needed, so I told him some facial cleanser and clean underwear. He duly came back later that

evening, but guess what he provided me with – Y fronts!! Well, we sure laughed about that. The trip was so exciting not just for the winners, but also for me. The helicopter was very noisy hence ear muffs and when on the platform, we were escorted around after receiving safety instructions. There was another member of Texaco staff there at the same time and when we were on the grid with the sea churning below, he felt a little nervous, so being a brave soldier, I said 'Make the most of this, it is the closest you will get to walking on water'. He still looked a little green and was glad to get back inside. Of course, when I got back to the hotel, there was my luggage. It did not spoil the trip for me and the young people were quite over-awed by the experience.

Community Affairs brought me into contact with charitable organisations, and sponsorship of various activities in areas where Texaco had a presence. In Aberdeen, we sponsored the Texaco Theatre School encouraging young people into the theatre, not just on stage but behind the scenes. There was a show put on every year and Annie Inglis was the brains behind this and a real gem to get the best from the young people. In Canary Wharf we were involved with two primary schools and also Mudchute City Farm. Getting the pupils from the schools to visit the farm was a joy to behold as many had not seen farm animals or seeing vegetables growing.

With the office in Swindon, we found a good sponsorship platform with the Swindon Dance School and the young dancers were very talented. They put on a show at the local theatre once a year and staff from the office were included in the audience. I still hear from the once head of the school, now retired, and she tells me of various students who have moved to a career in dance, the last one I heard of was Kilea Williams who



after a professional dance career in the UK and Australia is now a lecturer in dance at Melbourne University. It is so good we gave these young people their opportunities.

With the refinery in Pembroke, the office personnel managed a lot of their local community affairs, however, it was a pleasure to be involved with two large projects, one being the Tall Ships Race in 1991 where we arranged lots of events in a venue that was provided for this use on the quayside. We also held a buffet on one of the ships before the last concert, the night before the ships set sail the following day.

The other event was the Texaco Young Musician of Wales competition, (TYMW) which covered all of Wales; this was run in conjunction with Cor Meibion De Cymru (South Wales Male Choir) whom we also sponsored, particularly their St. David's Day concerts. TYMW encouraged musicians in their teens each studying music either at school or a dedicated music school and we had several rounds in various parts of Wales, followed by three semi-finals and then a Finals concert at Sherman Theatre in Cardiff for five finalists. We had a panel of professional musicians as judges who gave their time willingly. Allun John was the head judge and the competition was his idea. I still keep in touch with him and his wife and unfortunately, time is taking its toll on their health. This was a fantastic event that ran over the autumn of one year, with the final in the spring of the following year and ran for several years. We saw some wonderful talent and I truly hope they have all gone on to play music either as a career or for pleasure.

The next area where involvement in community affairs was provided was Northern Ireland. In Derry, we became involved with the Orchard Gallery

run by Pauline Ross and in Belfast, Youth Action Northern Ireland which brought young people together from across the divide and was run by a great ambassador Brian Draine. Many of the young people when they came together were homesick, but by the time they left after a week or two, they had made new friends and wanted to carry on. Each year of our sponsorship, the young people put on a short play in places like a shopping mall and the audiences were very receptive.

Now, the story about Northern Ireland has a romantic touch – yes that is where Maurice and I came together, he used to meet me at the airport and drive me to whichever group I would be working with, then go off to his work and collect me in the evening. We would have a meal together and became very good friends sending Profs messages (*remember them?*) to each other occasionally, then one time I was over there, that was it, it was more than friendship and we have now been married for 28 years, together for 30! Where has the time gone?

The other areas within my role were hospitality in various areas, golf, Wimbledon and of course Texaco Trophy One Day Cricket Internationals. So many good times meeting a variety of different people from all walks of life.

Then came the end of 1995 – I did not want to work in the media section of Public Affairs and most of the hospitality and community affairs programmes were coming to a halt so I was made redundant in December 1995. I had a wonderful time over the years and look back fondly on the variety of my roles and am thankful for the people I worked with. Thanks, Texaco, especially for Maurice.



Toys for Boys

Roger Tagg

This picture is of a model train layout, (note the Esso filling Station in the background), just wish it had been for real! Goodness knows when and where the model tanks came from, they could be part of my son's youthful collection when I worked for Texaco.



I do recall similar Texaco rail cars in both the Edinburgh and Soho-Poole Depots but no pictures were taken then as cameras with batteries may have been one of the many restricted items admitted to Fuel Storage Depots. These rail tankers were for transporting fuel oil which could be unpleasant stuff, some grades having to be heated just to allow it to flow, but were seemingly used by sea-going vessels.

What prompted me to send the picture was my return from the funeral of Peter Naylor a very good friend and a lifetime employee of Regent and Texaco. Mention of which prompts the observation that it's a bit scary how many of these notices are for people I knew and/or worked with and some are/were younger than I am.

Annual Lunch

Rod Pesch

We are once again writing out to get you to reserve the 25 October in your diaries for what is now our annual get-together at the RAF Club. Our numbers are still rising every year, so we must be doing something right. Anyway, we would say that if any of you are in touch with past colleagues, who would wish to join us, please do ask them to contact me. Although our numbers are mostly from London office, the invitation goes out to all the regions. Just get anyone to email me (rodpesch@aol.com) and I'll put them on our list Here are a couple of photographs from last year's event, the "usual suspects", courtesy of and thanks to Guy Vigar.



At this time, I am not requesting reservations as I am awaiting information on costs which I will advise to you all before asking for your confirmation on numbers.



A Host of Golden Daffodils

The story of a springtime favourite
From the Royal Horticultural Society.

The Daffodil is one of our most iconic flowers. The appearance of its cheerful yellow blooms in our gardens, parks and woodlands, announces the arrival of spring and hopefully brighter days to come. Today there are almost 27,000 Daffodil (*Narcissus*) cultivars, which come in a dazzling array of shapes and sizes. The UK grows more Daffodil crops than any other country, about half the world's total. The most popular garden varieties began to emerge in the past 200 years, but their story goes back much further.

It has been given many names – ‘Daffodowndilly’, ‘Flower of March’ and ‘trumpet flower’ to name three. Its Latin name has long associated the Daffodil with the Greek myth of the youth Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection and languished away by a pool of water. A Narcissus flower is said to have sprung from where he died. Another explanation behind its Latin name is its link with the Greek word *narco*, which is the root of the word ‘narcotic’ or ‘becoming numb’. The Daffodil is poisonous and this is one of a number of symptoms if eaten.

Wild Daffodils first grew in Spain and Portugal before spreading across Europe. Wordsworth's host of golden Daffodils was almost certainly one of the most pervasive of these wild species, the *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Sometimes called ‘Lent Lilies’, the familiar flowers grew all over Britain until the 19th century. Since then, wild populations have declined sharply due to agriculture, woodland clearances and the uprooting of bulbs in gardens.

It is quite a surprise that the Daffodil first became a popular garden plant in the Tudor and Elizabethan eras. Its natural appearance was far less suited to the geometrical patterns and symmetry of the formal garden styles of the time than other bulb plants like the Tulip. Daffodils are not a quick plant to hybridise as it can take several years to flower from seed. The new rage for plant breeding in the early 1800s initially had little room for the Daffodil – the focus was on exotic and expensive plants like orchids from far-flung parts of the globe. Daffodil breeding was a quieter revolution. It started in the 1830s with a Church of England clergyman. While Dean of Manchester, William Herbert (1778-1847) successfully cultivated several new hybrids and pioneered new ways of classifying them.

Here is a little about some people involved with the Daffodil's history.

John Parkinson, *Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629. In his book, he identified almost one hundred different varieties then growing in England. Between the late 1600s and early 1800s, many of these old varieties fell out of fashion and were lost forever. However, Parkinson's work would later inspire some of the most important Daffodil breeders of modern times.

One of the first to change the tide of popular opinion against the Daffodil was the Scottish nurseryman, Peter Barr (1826-1909). Inspired by the long-lost Daffodil varieties that John Parkinson had identified 200 years earlier, Peter Barr built up his own Daffodil collection; he purchased new hybrids raised by British growers, saving many of them from destruction. Barr's successful nursery business and slickly produced bulb catalogues, did much to increase the public appetite and also vastly improved the system by which new hybrids were classified.



Sarah Elizabeth Dodgson had married into the prolific daffodil-growing family, the Backhouses, who bred over 470 new Narcissi hybrids between them. Sara Backhouse pioneered the breeding of red-cupped Daffodils and two years after her death, her husband named the first-ever pink-cupped Daffodil in her memory.

Seeing vibrant yellow trumpets of Daffodils bursting from fields, roadsides and gardens each spring, it's hard to believe that a hundred years ago they came close to being entirely wiped out by disease. James Kirkham Ramsbottom, born in 1891, suffered poor health in his youth which led him to pursue a career outdoors. He studied at RHS Wisley in 1911 and completed his diploma in 1913. In 1916 Ramsbottom was given the job of leading a study into 'rootless' disease in Daffodils and he concluded that the culprit was actually a kind of eelworm and discovered that boiling the Narcissus bulbs in a hot water bath at 43 degrees C killed the eelworm, but did not destroy the bulb. This process is still used today on an industrial scale to treat bulbs before planting. *Ditylenchus dipsaci* is now known as the stem and bulb nematode and is still the most significant pest in Daffodils. He died tragically in 1925 at the age of 33 and we would not have the richness of Daffodils and Narcissus if it wasn't for him.

There have been many artists of these lovely flowers and these can be viewed on the RHS Lindley Library website.

Hooray for the heralding of spring with the fantastic array of the very welcome sight of Daffodils.

Poetry Corner

Daffodils (1804)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way
They stretched in never ending line
Along the margin of a bay
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them dance, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company
I gazed and gazed but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in a pensive mood
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the Daffodils.

The Oak Tree

Poet: Johnny Ray Ryder Jr.

A mighty wind blew night and day
It stole the oak tree's leaves away
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
Until the oak was tired and stark



But still the oak tree held its ground
While other trees fell all around
The weary wind gave up and spoke,
“How can you still be standing Oak?”

The oak tree said, “I know that you
Can break each branch of mine in two
Carry every leaf away
Shake my limbs, and make me sway.

But I have roots stretched in the earth
Growing stronger since my birth
You'll never touch them, for you see
They are the deepest part of me.

Until today, I wasn't sure
Of just how much I could endure
But now I've found, with thanks to you
I'm stronger than I ever knew.”

Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent in Western Christian churches. It is also known as Pancake Day or Mardi Gras. The name Shrove comes from the word “shrive”, which means to confess one's sins and seek forgiveness. On this day, Christians would traditionally go to church and prepare for the 40 days of fasting and penance before Easter.

One of the customs of Shrove Tuesday is to eat pancakes, which are made from flour, eggs, milk, and sugar. These ingredients were considered rich and luxurious, and people wanted to use them up before Lent, when they were supposed to abstain from such foods. Pancakes also symbolized the sun and the coming of spring, as they were round and golden. In some countries, people also have pancake races, where they run while flipping pancakes in a frying pan. This tradition is said to have started in England when a woman heard the church bells ringing and ran out of her house with her pancake and pan.

Shrove Tuesday is celebrated in different ways around the world, depending on the local culture and history. For example, in Belgium, people dress up as clowns and throw oranges at the crowd. In New Orleans, people wear colourful costumes and beads and enjoy a king cake, which has a plastic baby inside. Whoever finds the baby is supposed to host the next party. Shrove Tuesday is a day of fun, feasting, and festivity, before the solemn season of Lent begins.

I hope you had a Happy Easter following these traditions. Ed!

A Bees Life.

The bee lives for less than forty days, visits at least 1,000 flowers and produces less than a teaspoon of honey. For us, it is only a teaspoon, but for the bee, it is a life. Thank you bees!

Chatham Dock Yard

You may remember an article about the Ropery at Chatham Dock Yard in Issue 77, May 2000 edition of RN.

The Dock Yard is celebrating forty years since its closure in 1984 as a busy shipbuilding plant and port in Medway, Kent. The closure affected the loss of over 18,000 jobs and people who worked there or in related businesses. HMS Hermione was the last warship to leave from Chatham. The history of seafarers started with sail, moved to steam and then nuclear. There are now 180 businesses at the site employing over 1,000 people using the area in the dockyard for creative use. The Ropery is still in action on site.

Did you know that the Dock Yard is the home of the popular BBC programme Call the Midwife and that there are another two series scheduled, which will again be filmed at the Dock Yard?



There are many events planned to celebrate not only forty years since its closure, but the 400-year history of the site. Check it out at bbc.co.uk/kent.

Congratulations to all my friends who were born in the 1930s. 1940's. 1950's and 1960's.

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us and lived in houses made of asbestos.

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese, raw egg products, loads of bacon and processed meat, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes or cervical cancer.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright-coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets or shoes, not to mention, the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or airbags.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

Takeaway food was limited to fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonald's, KFC, Subway or Nandos.

Even though all the shops closed at 6.00 pm and didn't open on a Sunday, somehow, we didn't starve to death!

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and no one actually died from this.

We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the corner store and buy Toffees, Gobstoppers, and Bubble Gum.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter and drank soft drinks with sugar in them, but we weren't overweight because we were always outside playing!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day and we were O.K.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes.

We built tree houses and dens and played in river beds with matchbox cars.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo Wii X-boxes, no video games at all, no 999 channels on SKY, no video/DVD films, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.

We had friends and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

Only girls had pierced ears!

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time.

Boys were given air guns and catapults for their tenth birthdays.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door, rang the bell, or just yelled for them!



Mum didn't have to go to work to help Dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Joneses!

Not everyone made the rugby/football/cricket/netball team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!! Getting into the team was based on merit.

Our teachers used to hit us with canes and gym shoes and throw the blackboard rubber at us if they thought we weren't concentrating.

We can string sentences together and spell and have proper conversations because of a good, solid three R's education.

Our parents would tell us to ask a stranger to help us cross the road.

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

Our parents didn't invent stupid names for their kids like 'Kiora' and 'Blade' and 'Ridge' and 'Vanilla' and 'Tiger'

We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all!

You are one of them! Congratulations!

You might want to share this with others who have had the luck to grow up as kids before the lawyers and the government regulated our lives for our own good. And while you are at it, forward it to your kids so they will know how brave their parents were.

?? QUIZ

Answers to the quiz in the November 2021 issue of Retiree News were:

1 Little Richard, 2 Frank Ifield, 3 Marty Wilde, 4 Beatles, 5 Rolling Stones, 6 Boyzone, 7 Ray Charles, 8 Buddy Holly, 9 Barbara Dickson, 10 Cold Play, 11 Dolly Parton, 12 Don Maclean, 13 Gerry and the Pacemakers, 14 Sandie Shaw, 15 The Foundations, 16 Chubby Checker, 17 Adele, 18 Final Countdown by Europe, 19 Adam Faith, 20 Tom Jones.

Thanks again to John Clark for the music quiz which was enjoyed by participants, however, there was only one correct answer.

The winner was:
Gillian Gowing, Pembroke.

Thanks for all taking part and congratulations to Gillian. Ed!

Here is the quiz for this issue of Retiree News.

Nature Knowledge

- 1 What is a 'blind' plant?
- 2 What is another name for the Rowan tree?
- 3 In Norse mythology what kind of tree is Yggdrasil, the tree of life?
- 4 What is tilth?
- 5 Where would you find 'Potato Eaters'? a) In your vegetable patch, b) On a bookshelf, c) In a gallery, d) In an aviary.
- 6 To which continent is teak native?
- 7 What would you be doing if you were in Scotland 'tattie hawking'?



- 8 Which laundry product was at one time made from the juice of bluebell bulbs?
- 9 The 'berries' of *Pyracantha* are scientifically known as what?
- 10 Larkspur is the common name for which genus of flowering plants?
- 11 Which garden pest goes by the Latin name of *Talpa eruopaea*?
- 12 In gardening terms, what is a 'maiden'?
- 13 With what would you fill a French drain?
- 14 Which part of a tree is used to make corks?
- 15 What type of leaves does a 'hirsute' plant have?
- 16 Which fruit links Earl Grey tea and Eau de Cologne?
- 17 What is the common name of *Ace rubrum*?
- 18 Which vegetable did Mark Twain describe as 'Cabbage with a college education'?
- 19 Which fungal infection causes pustules on the underside of brassica leaves?
- 20 Why is it necessary to be wary of *Berberis* plants? a) They are poisonous, b) They are thorny, c) They attract wasps, d) The foliage can irritate the skin.

Answers please to the Editor, (details at foot of Retiree News) to be received by 15 August 2024 by email or post. Editors' decision is final. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS!!

With his response to the quiz, I received a letter from Chris Belcher advising that he and his wife Carol celebrated 61 years of marriage last May plus he was 80 years young on 4 May this year.

He also said he 'luvs' the Chuckle spot and had made up some signs then put them up in his front garden for all to see. Passing people always stop and smile, even a very young girl dropped a card through his door and said 'Thank you for making me laugh on my way to school'.

Glad that you found them amusing and were able to bring a smile to other people. See below in the 'Time for a Chuckle' spot and some are from Chris. Ed!.

80 Birthday

Chris Belcher (T), Essex

85 Birthday

St Atkinson (G), Forest of Dean

90 Birthday

Maurice Saffrey (T), Medway

Diamond Wedding Anniversaries

Geoffrey and Eiona Aston's Wedding Anniversary was on the 21 March 2024. They were married in Pontardulais in 1964 at Trinity Chapel Pontardulais, which they still call the "Holy City", and hail from Llanelli the home of the Scarlets rugby team. Geoff currently plays golf at Tenby Golf Club the oldest Golf Club in Wales, (visitors are very welcome), which he has done since they moved down to St Florence, Tenby in 1977 to join Texaco at the Pembroke Refinery, while Eiona became the School Cook in the Village school. Eiona took early retirement in 1997, and Geoff followed her in 1998, then they both played more golf. They celebrated locally with the family.



So That's Where It Comes From!

In English pubs, ale is ordered in pints and quarts. In old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them 'Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down. It's where we get the phrase 'mind your P's and Q's' Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. 'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the Honeymoon.

English is a Crazy Language

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? Or, one goose, two geese? So, one moose, two meese? One index, two indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Sometimes I think all English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm goes off by going on. English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are on, they are invisible.

Observations!

The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't a robot!

When a kid says "Daddy, I want mommy" that's the kid's version of "I'd like to speak to your supervisor."

I don't mean to interrupt people but I just randomly remember things and get really excited.

I thought growing old would take longer.

It's weird being the same age as old people.



I'm at that delusional age where I think everyone my age looks way older than I do.

Just once I want a username and password prompt to say CLOSE ENOUGH.

Do you ever wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and think - "That can't be accurate.?!"

Last night the internet stopped working so I spent a few hours with my family. They seem like good people.

Weight loss goal: To be able to clip my toenails and breathe at the same time.

Some of my friends exercise every day, meanwhile, I am watching a show I don't like because the remote fell on the floor.

I just got a present labelled, From Mom and Dad, and you know Dad has no idea what's inside.

Animal Crackers

You learn something new every day!

Kangaroos are only an inch long at birth.

A chameleon's body is half as long as its tongue.

Goldfish remember better in cold water than in warm water.

Bulls don't see red, they are colour-blind.

Hummingbirds can't walk.

An albatross can stay airborne for days on end without flapping its wings.

Polar Bears can smell you up to twenty miles away.
(one of my most favourite animals, Ed!)

Electric eels can produce 400 volts of electricity.

Only male canaries sing.

Full-grown whales eat three tons of food a day.

Camel humps store fat, not water.

Dolphins sleep with one eye open.

Chameleons can look in different directions at once.

RESPONSIBILITY

Anonymous

Once upon a time, there were four people...

Their names were *Everybody*, *Somebody*, *Nobody* and *Anybody*.

Whenever there was an important job to be done, *Everybody* was sure that *Somebody* would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but *Nobody* did it. When *Nobody* did it, *Everybody* got angry because... it was *Everybody's* job!

Everybody thought that *Somebody* would do it, but *Nobody* realized that *Nobody* would do it.

So, consequently, *Everybody* blamed *Somebody*... when *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have done in the first place!



Time for a Chuckle

Started a new job today as a delivery man. When I got to my first address, there was a sticky note on the door saying, "Dear Mr. Delivery Man, we're out, please hide in the garage." That was six hours ago and nobody has found me yet!

Wife texts husband on a cold wintery morning: "Windows frozen won't open!" Husband texts back: "Gently pour some warm water on it and then gently tap the edges with a hammer." The wife texts back a few minutes later: "Computer really messed up now!"



A sweet grandmother telephoned St. Joseph's Hospital and she timidly asked, "Is it possible to speak to someone who can tell me how a patient is doing?" The operator responded, "I'll be glad to help, dear. What's the patient's name and room number?" The grandmother in her weak tremulous voice said, "Norma Findlay, Room 302." The operator replied, "Let me place you on hold while I check with her nurse." After a few minutes, the operator returned to the phone. "Oh, good news. Her nurse has told me that Norma is doing very well. Her blood pressure is fine; her blood work just came back as normal and her physician, Dr. Cohen, has scheduled her to be discharged Tuesday." The grandmother said, "Thank you. That's wonderful. I was so worried! God bless you for the good news." The operator replied, "You're more than welcome. Is Norma your daughter?" The grandmother said, "No, I'm Norma Findlay in Room 302. No one tells me anything."

From Chris Belcher

I wasn't very good a spelling at school, great at Jografy tho'...

My wife and I lived happily for 25 years, then we met...

My wife dresses to kill, she cooks the same!

OBITUARIES

Sadly, we record the passing of our colleagues. RIP.

Michael Alan Akerstedt (T) on 10/03/24 age 82, Cheltenham

Philip Arnold (T) on 29/10/23 age 66, Somerset

Allan Frederick Astles (G) on 14/01/24 age 83, Milford Haven

Aileen Agnes Barclay (C) on 13/10/23 age 82, Aberdeen

Alexander Neill Bennett (C) on 04/12 23 age 68, Dollar

Alice Edith Bowe (T) on 22/11/23 age 68. Middlesex

Ernest James Bryant (G) on 05/02/24 age 84, Milford Haven

John Patrick Carey (T) on 21/01/24 age 76, Manchester

Stylianios Christides (Std) on 24/01/24 age 67, Aberdeen

Leonard Francis Clark (G) on 27/01/24 age 92, Essex

Terence Daley (T) on 16/01/24 age 91, Surrey

David Michael Dicken (C) on 21/01/24 age 68, Scarborough

John Millar Doig (T) on 26/08/23 age 95, Bristol

Neil Graham Goodall (G) on 14/08/23 age 77, Surrey

Ronald John Groves (G) on 13/03/24 age 98, Bicester

Richard Karl Hibbert (T) on 05/10/23 age 76, Cyprus

G P Hunt (T) on 18/04/23 age 91, Australia

John Meirion James (G) on 20/01/24 age 86, Milford Haven

Thomas Clifford James (G) on 18/02/24 age 82, Haverfordwest

Owen Jenkins (T) on 08/12/23 age 86, Maidenhead

Eric John Jennings (G) on 21/09/23 age 76, Fleet

Peter Logan (T) on 05/03/24 age 84, Kilmarnock

Christopher Mallinson (C) on 11/02/24 age 75, Huddersfield

Francis John Marks (G) on 15/03/24 age 85, Caerphilly



*Barry Joseph Marshall (T) on 19/01/24 age 93,
Surrey*

*Gordon William Miller (C) on 13/11/23 age 76,
Aberdeenshire*

*Jayesh Mistry (Std) on 16/10/23 age 60,
Hertfordshire*

*Brian Charles Morrall (G) on 19/12/23 age 85,
Horley, Surrey*

*Peter Jeremy Naylor (T) on 19/10/23 age 84,
Preston*

*John Beaton Pearce (G) on 20/11/23 age 94,
Milford Haven*

*Denys Maxwell Ravenhill (T) on 04/11/23 age 92,
Dyfed*

*Derek Anthony Robinson (G) on 19/10/23 age 84,
Cheltenham*

*William Arthur Rolls (G) on 30/09/23 age 92, Milford
Haven*

Graeme Ross (Std) on 29/02/24 age 61, Chester

*Michael Allen Rutter (G) on 15/12/23 age 81,
Stockport*

*Robert William Sandison (C) on 30/10/23 age 67,
Aberdeen*

*Anthony Edward Shapcott (T) on 05/12/23 age 90,
Gwent*

*Leonard Roy Stevens (G) on 12/03/24 age 87,
Worcester*

*Peter Hamish Street (T) on 25/12/23 age 74,
Pembroke*

*Guy Marsden Wareing (G) on 19/12/23 age 83,
Oxfordshire*

*Margaret Steele Watt (G) on 04/12/23 age 92,
Cheltenham*

B H Williams (T) on 16/10/23 age 95, Cornwall

*David Henry Willis (T) on 03/02/24 age 77,
Pembroke*

*Mario Woznica (C) on 09/03/24 age 69, Isle of
Wight*

*Robert Marshall Young (T) on 21/12/23 age 74,
Cupar*



Quotes

To make a difference in someone's life, you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful or perfect, you just have to care. *Anon*

They say with age comes wisdom therefore I don't have wrinkles, I have wisecracks.

May every sunrise bring more promise
And every sunset hold more peace. *Anon*

Editors Last Word

*May your day be touched by a bit of Irish luck
Brightened by a song in your heart
And warmed by the people you love*

June Parham McCullough

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