



THE BRITISH SOCIETY
IN URUGUAY
FOUNDED 1918

CONTACT

APRIL 2021

The British Society in Uruguay
Annual General Meeting

British Uruguayan Club
Online Conference

Chef Phillip's Corner
**Mediterranean Style
Grouper**

www.britsoc.org.uy



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Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear members, March saw the first face-to-face event of 2021, the Scavenger Hunt, which was again a big success, particularly among non-members. Participants followed clues, discovered things, found requested items along the way, answered cryptic questions, and performed unusual tasks to attain the prizes generously given by the event sponsors (this year, **Tea Please, Urufarma, Cadbury, InBrokers Risk Management and Del Mar Kombucha**). Eight teams took part in the Hunt, the winners being team "Spice Girls", an all-girl outfit of anglophile Uruguayans. Due to the conditions imposed by the pandemic, prize-giving was again virtual, but by the reactions seen online, teams enjoyed it regardless. If you missed it, that was your bad!

You will recall we had planned to have the first of a new cycle of Literary Teas in early April. Though the idea still holds, recent developments regarding the pandemic have forced us to postpone this event until May, with the date to be confirmed. I will, however, let you know that the first Literary Tea will still be hosted at the British Residence by Ambassador Faye O'Connor and that the works to be presented (by the Society's literature expert, Lindsey Cordery) and discussed will be Lewis Carroll's Alice books. In view of the pandemic, the event will still be for a reduced amount of participants, though we are hoping to broaden this further on in the year.

Later this month, on 29 April, we will be having our Annual General Meeting (AGM), which I encourage all members to attend. If you want to have a say in Society affairs or simply be informed first-hand of relevant developments you should make a point of participating; it is your Society, so we are interested in hearing your views. We had originally planned to have the AGM at Britannia House, but the rise in coronavirus cases and Government recommendations urging citizens to remain within their social bubbles have prompted us to decide to have the event online, as we did last year. You will find a link to participate in the event on [page 8](#) in this newsletter.

I would like to remind you that any member can send the Executive Committee nominations for honorary membership, which will be evaluated by us and then presented at the AGM. Nominations should be submitted using the honorary membership form on our website at [Honorary Members](#). The idea behind honorary membership is to reward the effort of those who have dedicated time and effort for the benefit of the British community.

Thus, nominating someone to this honour is recognition of that person's actions in favour of the community. We encourage you to do nominate someone you think deserves it!

Finally, a gentle reminder that we are now in 2021 and your annual membership fee is due. Remember you now pay from the comfort of your own home through RedTickets at [2021 Membership Fee](#). If you forgot to pay last year's fee (or owe more than two years), you can simply pay two (or more, as the case may be) at the same RedTickets link; our Treasurer will balance out your debt accordingly. Also remember that the cost of subscriptions is adjusted each year at the AGM, so if you pay your debt before then the price will be the current (lower) one.

From a personal viewpoint, since I will be stepping down as President this month – given that I have served the maximum term allowed by Society statutes – I hope to see you online at the AGM.

Richard Empson MBE
President



LITERARY TEA
AT THE BRITISH RESIDENCE
THURSDAY 8TH APRIL

Teas provided by:





Birthdays

in April

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 02 · Rodrigo Linn | 14 · Gustavo A. Capurro |
| 03 · Beryl E. Fitzherbert | 16 · Ana C. Vernengo |
| 04 · María P. Coates | 17 · Anna S. Beare |
| 04 · Eduardo Nogueira | 19 · Simone C. Beauvois |
| 04 · Chiara Sosa | 19 · Charlotte E. Brooke |
| 04 · Jack Sprigings | 19 · Joyce Gepp |
| 06 · Patricia M. Alvarez | 20 · Jonathan C. Lamb |
| 06 · Nicolás Castro | 20 · Marcos Vercelli |
| 06 · María R. Reyes | 21 · Beatriz C. Di Pace |
| 06 · Victoria Z. Swarbrick | 21 · Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor |
| 06 · Zelmira "Mirita" Velasco | 22 · Ophelia M. Aenlle |
| 07 · Elisa S. Cooper | 22 · John R. McConnell |
| 07 · Martin H. MacAdam | 25 · William Hambrook |
| 08 · Marc Beare | 27 · Patricia A. Cobham |
| 08 · Geoffrey W. Deakin | 28 · Lorraine V. Castleton |
| 09 · Robin Cooper | 28 · Dylan Fairless |
| 10 · Facundo Del Campo | 29 · Malcolm S. Morton |
| 10 · Cecilia Ferrere | 29 · Carlos Paolino |
| 10 · Joaquín Salhón | 29 · Marion Wharton |
| 12 · Sylvia Tosar | |

EULOGY

Jazz musician Rolf Schuster, long time partner of Ullly Drever, passed away 23rd March. He will be missed by his step daughters Susan and Ann, granddaughters and great grandson.

The funeral was private.

THIS MONTH'S COVER



Falls of Clyde, New Lanark.

This reserve is famous for its spectacular waterfalls, historic visitors, and scenic woodland walks. Over 100 bird species have been recorded including dipper, raven, and kingfisher. Daubenton's bats can be spotted feeding over the river in the evenings. Badgers forage amongst the undergrowth and otters are sometimes seen along the riverbank.

The reserve has a network of paths, including the top section of the Clyde Walkway.

The Falls of Clyde is part of the Clyde Valley Woodlands National Nature Reserve.

Stay safe,

Geoffrey W Deakin
Editor

MEMBERSHIP FEES

The British Society would like to kindly remind all members who have not yet done so to get up to date with their membership fees.

Remember you can now do this easily from the comfort of your own home using any local debit card and most credit cards through the [RedTickets](#) platform.

And if you forgot to pay last year's fee (or any previous unpaid dues), you can simply pay two or more at the same RedTickets link or by visiting our [Website](#).

Else you can make a bank transfer (or direct deposit) to the **British Society** account at **Banque Heritage** Uruguay number 62582-03, or pay our Treasurer (in copy) directly. If done by bank transfer/deposit, please send our Treasurer a copy of the transfer/deposit slip.



2021



Once this is done, your membership will be updated.

2021 SCAVENGER HUNT

Eight teams took part in the Hunt, the winners being team "Spice Girls", an all-girl outfit of anglophile Uruguayans



Activities



Every day different activities are done, and handicrafts are made with lovely results. Exercising and walking are daily activities too.



Enjoying the balcony



We are incredibly lucky to have a lovely balcony that gives onto Avenida Italia which our residents enjoy visiting mainly in the mornings as it is much too hot in the afternoons.

Flowers from the Embassy

On March 12 Claire Ward from the British Embassy contacted the Home to offer us lots of beautiful flower arrangements from a recent event which were enjoyed by all the residents at the Home. Many thanks!!!



Sign Makeover

George Stewart spotted the Sir Winston Churchill Home sign above the door of the Home and kindly offered to polish and protect it with a special paint, so it was removed, he took it home and returned it a week later looking beautiful.



Thanks so much!



Making Chutney



Chutney is a favourite at the Home. There are always plenty of helping hands to make and bottle it, and many to eat it!



Barbecue time

Last week the residents enjoyed chorizos and asado de tira cooked on our electric barbecue.





THE BRITISH SOCIETY
IN URUGUAY
FOUNDED 1918

2021 AGM

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 29th of April
at 19:00 hours
Online Meet

[Click Here to Join the AGM](#)

Get involved!





Leader for a Day

March 8th was International Women's Day. To celebrate, the Embassy hosted a "Líder Por Un Día" networking event, in which young women met with a range of women in prominent leadership positions and were able to shadow them for a day to experience what their daily lives are like.

Competition to take part was fierce, and each of young applicants had to send in a video application explaining who they wished to accompany and why. The eight winners spent the day with: Ambassador Faye O'Connor, Vice President Beatriz Argimón, Sellin co-founder and entrepreneur Mariana Chilibroste, Mayor Carolina Cosse, UTE President and engineer Silvia Emaldi, UdelaR and Institute Pasteur scientist Pilar Moreno, TV and radio presenter and journalist Blanca Rodríguez, and AstraZeneca Logistics Manager Alejandra Silveira



Embajada Británica
Montevideo

Follow us online: www.gov.uk/fcdo

INTEGRATED REVIEW

GLOBAL BRITAIN IN A COMPETITIVE AGE

The British government announced its Integrated Review this month, the most comprehensive articulation of the UK's foreign policy & national security approach in decades. The review sets out the UK's vision for its role in the world in the decades to come, through to 2030. It lists the areas in which the UK will be especially committed, which include solving global challenges like the coronavirus

pandemic, tackling climate change, investing in science and technology, strengthening global security, championing free trade, and acting as a force for good in the world. You can find further information [here](#)

The Ambassador gave an interview to "Búsqueda" about this and other topics, which can be read [here](#)

Visit to Canelones

Using her personal electric car in order to avoid additional petrol emissions, Ambassador Faye O'Connor made an official visit to Canelones this month. Whilst there she had a busy programme, which included visits to English language schools, a carrot plantation in San Antonio, and Campo Longley who breed Jersey cattle – a British breed much loved in the UK.

The Ambassador was pleased to meet with Intendente Yamandú Orsi, to speak of their shared interest in increasing electric car usage to reduce pollution. Ambassador O'Connor also met with Andrew Bowen, CEO of **One Carbon World**. Andrew is a British national living in Aguas Corrientes, from where he runs OCW which is dedicated to helping companies offset their carbon emissions.





ONLINE CONFERENCE INVITATION

WEDNESDAY 7TH OF APRIL 13:00 HOURS

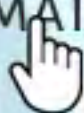
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO URUGUAY

FAYE O'CONNOR
OBE



**GLOBAL BRITAIN:
THE NEW FOREIGN POLICY OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM AND ITS BONDING WITH
URUGUAY POST-BREXIT**

MORE INFORMATION



WWW.CUB.UY

LENT 2021

The Preparation



Christ
Church
MONTEVIDEO



Do you have a good recommendation for Netflix? I have one for you: "The Mole Agent". I found it most unexpectedly enjoyable, insightful, and challenging. It is the opposite of "Hunt for the Wilderpeople" which I also enjoyed immensely. Oh yes, watch "Big Idea".

The best "series" on not on Netflix anymore! You must go to www.christchurchmvd.org where we have some excellent series developed and self-produced throughout 2020 and 2021. A wide variety of episodes can be watched easily on a phone, tablet, or laptop. You can also access the audio only if you prefer. Each episode lasts about 15 minutes. I wonder if you found any to be particularly helpful or interesting?

Each week up more than fifty people gather via Zoom to have an easy conversation about the most current episode. You might like to join just to see what it is like. You will need the Zoom link so just write text John Hamilton at 094268 761.

Christ Church continues to meet online only although the Chapel is open at times for prayer. We feel that extra caution for us responsible and allows people to tend to their most essential needs of home and work.

Together we work and pray for wisdom for our leaders, health for our community and peace with provision for all.

Thanks for reading!

Pastor John Hamilton

Arocena 1907
Esq. Lieja, Carrasco
Tel 2601 0300

contact@christchurchmvd.org
www.christchurchmvd.org



Christ
Church
MONTEVIDEO

Language improvement for teachers at B2 and C1 levels

LEVEL B2

This course aims to help teachers improve their level of English beyond B2 level.

If you are teaching and your level of English is B2 or higher, this language improvement course can help you keep your English up to scratch.

With a clear emphasis on the development of the listening and speaking skills, we shall be using materials from a wide variety of sources but in all cases, the course aims to deal with topical issues and subjects of your interest.

Optional final assessed task.

Language level: B2 or higher

**LEVEL C1**

This course aims to help teachers improve their level of English beyond C1 level.

If you are teaching and your level of English is C1 or higher, this language improvement course can help you keep your English up to scratch.

With a clear emphasis on the development of the listening and speaking skills, we shall be using materials from a wide variety of sources but in all cases, the course aims to deal with topical issues and subjects of your interest.

Optional final assessed task.

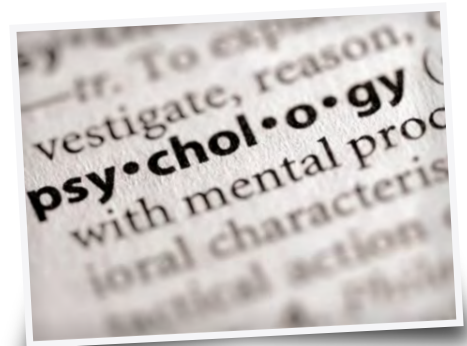
Language level: C1 or higher

Psychology for teachers

This course will offer teachers the opportunity to review some of the most influential developmental theories and connect them to their everyday teaching.

We will be exploring key concepts and discussing their practical implications to understand how people learn best. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences and analyse study cases in order to understand and discuss the main principles of developmental psychology, which in turn, will allow them to make informed decisions and offer quality learning experiences to all age groups.

Language level: B2 or higher



Teaching advanced levels

In this course we will discuss issues, problems and solutions in teaching advanced level students. We aim at creating a relaxed but stimulating learning environment where insights, ideas and experiences can be generated and shared and where participants have the opportunity to reflect on the nature of teaching advanced level students and get practical ideas as well.

Language level: C2 or higher

Course fee: Two instalments of \$3.000 each


STARTING IN APRIL

For further information you can write to cfernandez@anglo.edu.uy or call 2902 3773 ext. 1129

Bilingual Secondary Education now in Town too!



Tuesday 2nd March, a very special day for families and staff at the Anglo, as it marked the achievement of a new milestone for the Anglo School. Early that morning, a group of primary students welcomed our new Secondary Form 1 students and cheered them as they entered the building on San José 1426, giving this moment an emotional touch.

With a mix of nervousness and excitement, they made their way to the fourth floor, where they accessed the new Anglo School Secondary sector: the classrooms, a laboratory, the dining Room and a playground which are now being used by our very first generation of secondary students.

In a simple but significant ceremony due to Covid protocols, school

authorities inaugurated the new sector. The President of the Board, Mark Teuten, delivered a welcome speech and Gerardo Valazza, General Manager, and Geraldine Pool, General Director, cut the ribbon and invited students in to their school.

At The Anglo School we take pride in offering our students a well-rounded education. Excellence in bilingual education and the emphasis on our core values: respect, responsibility, empathy and self-esteem, are key to develop the full potential of each of our students in different areas of their life at School; academics, sports, the arts.

Our thanks go to the Anglo Community, for their continued trust and support.

For further information contact us at theangloschool@anglo.edu.uy



COVID: Vaccination and care

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVIEW WITH
DR JORGE FACAL



An inoculation programme has been established by the health authorities which involves the completion of different stages for different risk and age groups, prioritizing some groups such as teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other officials in highly exposed situations, as well as for residents in care homes for older adults and health-care staff. Also, the type of vaccine to be given to each of these groups has been determined.

This measure is of the utmost importance and establishes a commitment for all of us, it's your civic duty as an individual but also for the rest of the population, since the higher the percentage of the population we can immunize, the greater the overall protection.

At present there are two types of COVID-19 vaccines available in Uruguay: one is the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine which has the messenger RNA (mRNA) technology and the other is the CoronaVac vaccine developed by the Chinese company Sinovac Biotech which is an inactivated vaccine that uses killed viral particles.

Both are safe and shown to have an effectiveness of between 95% and 100% against severe symptomatic COVID-19 cases, severe and critical hospitalizations, and deaths.

The difference between the two, apart from their ingredients, lies in a different percentage of effectiveness in preventing mild cases of this disease. But the most important thing is to prevent the most serious cases and that's where both vaccines have shown they are equally effective.

What are the side effects from the vaccine?

These can be localised -tenderness, swelling and/or redness at the injection site- or generalised, with fever under 37-38°C, headache, muscle and joint ache and nausea. These are the most common side effects that can be managed at home.

Who should not get vaccinated?

Those who have had previous episodes of severe allergic reactions with respiratory distress from other vaccines,

should report this at the time of vaccination, so that you may be closely monitored for a further period after receiving the vaccine.

After being vaccinated you will be asked to remain in an area near the vaccination room in which you will be monitored for 15 minutes and those with a prior history of allergic episodes, will be monitored for 30 minutes. Having had allergies, asthma, rhinitis, and rashes in the past does not constitute a contraindication to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Is maintaining preventive measures important?

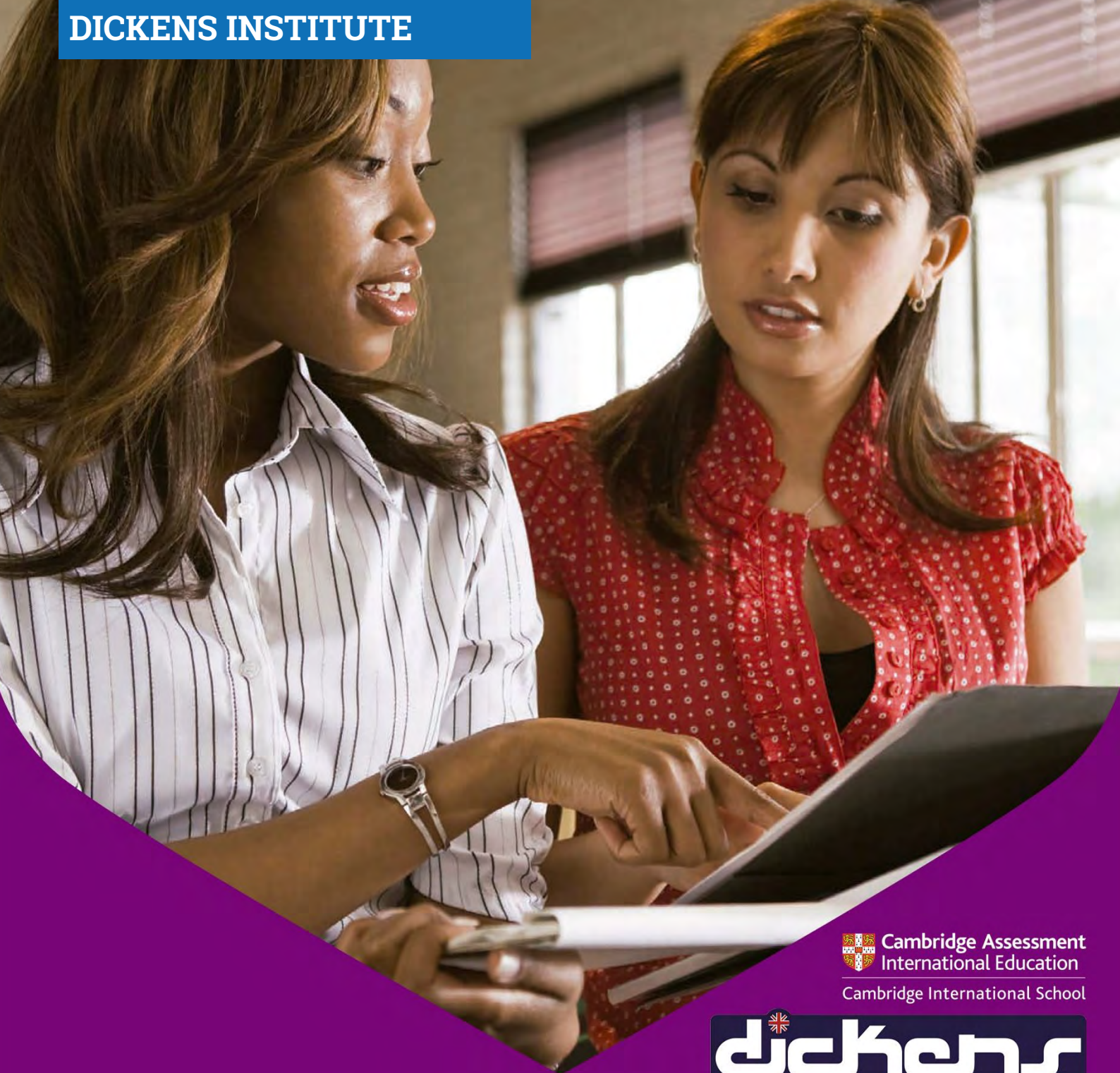
So far, the vaccine has shown to be effective in reducing severe cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, but it has not shown to completely eliminate the spreading of the virus.

While the vaccination programme is ongoing, we must continue with the existing preventive measures of social distancing, the wearing of a face mask, washing of hands, avoiding crowds and good ventilation of the spaces we are in.

There are countries where a high percentage of the population has already been vaccinated, such as Israel or Scotland, where not only hospitalization and severe cases have fallen, but also the effectiveness of the vaccine for asymptomatic cases has been seen.

All this gives us reasons to be hopeful that we may be able to return to life as we knew it before, but as long as we don't reach a significant percentage of immunization of the population, we must continue with the existing preventive measures.

Those who have received the first dose become partially immunized, which increases noticeably after the second dose. People who have recovered from COVID-19 mostly develop a natural immunity lasting approximately 6 months. For this reason, this group is encouraged to be vaccinated once this time has elapsed. In this way those who have not developed a natural immunity may be prioritized for the vaccine.



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Message from Ambassador Faye O'Connor to CertTESOL Graduates



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/mAfD07i2o7E>



20 Trainees passed the Moderation with flying colours! The Moderator congratulated trainers and newly graduated teachers on their good results, performance and sound theoretical knowledge. She rounded up by assuring all concerned that all 20 were well prepared for the current teaching needs.

Dickens first Teacher Training Course's Moderation by Zoom was a great success. Congratulations to one and all!



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The Trinity College London Teaching Young Learners Extension Certificate (TYLEC) is an in-service qualification designed to equip English language teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to teach children aged 7-16 years anywhere in the world.

This qualification is suitable for teachers who have little or no experience of teaching young learners and for practising teachers of young learners who would benefit from specialised training.

The CertTESOL is suitable for aspiring teachers from any background who are attracted to the English language teaching profession. Choosing a career in TESOL offers teachers opportunities to work at home and internationally and to experience life in different cultures.

Designed to build the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence to teach English to young learners, TYLEC also equips teachers with a firm foundation for ongoing self-evaluation and further professional development.


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Armageddon

“And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon” Revelation 16:16, NRSV Bible

In Latin terms, Revelation is called Apocalypse, which, means ‘A vision of heavenly secrets that can make sense of earthly realities’ (Wikipedia), against the backdrop of the complete and final destruction of the world. The apocalyptic style of writing was typical of the 1st century CE. The ‘final battle’ between the forces of Good and Bad was to take place and the troops and the wise men of the times huddled in the ancient town of Megiddo (Harmagedon) preparing for the moment. The historical episode occurred in the 15th century BCE between the Egyptians and the Canaanians.

The pandemic has shifted gears into the worst scenario possible: massive community spread, new variants which are more transmissible and maybe even more deadly; isolation, quarantine, and lockdowns everywhere, in a desperate attempt to gain time when, approaching Holy Week, the health sector is about to succumb to the pressure of a tsunami of patients. The Manhattan-like project of creating vaccines in a race against time has worked: nearly 10 different vaccines with multiple modes of action produced by manufacturers from across the globe are already in use. The initial politization of doubts about their efficacy and safety has gradually given way to common sense and the realisation that we finally have many weapons to use, all of which are effective to a greater or lesser degree. The time of the Final Battle has come at last.

It won’t be easy. There is still a lot of suffering ahead: disease and deaths due to the virus will be rampant for many months, until the forces of humankind eventually prevail. The cost to society, the economy and the lives and livelihoods of everyone, will last for many years, maybe the lifetime of those who’ve experienced the pandemic.

For those who were born during these months, the world in which they’ll grow will be unlike the one of their parents and elders.

So, back to the title and its meaning: what sense can we make of our earthly realities? The world has, maybe more locally than globally, been here before. Natural disasters, pandemics like the plague, yellow fever, and cholera, have decimated humanity many times. Locusts, famine, flooding, drought, and war have produced mass migrations across the globe. We who live in the Americas from Alaska to the Beagle channel descend from people who’ve fled unfavourable circumstances, especially in Europe.

But this time we’re all in sync: we’ve become aware that nobody’s safe until we’re all safe. The vaccine-grabbing behaviour will probably make some richer nations safe for a while. In the meantime, the virus will linger, mutating, in many Wuhans spread across the globe, ready to find its way everywhere. We’ve progressively understood that health is a priority, and that the economy requires healthy people, supported by the government as needed. We are now aware that the magnitude, frequency, and intensity of human global travel, is a vulnerability. And, most of all, we now know that, even if this pandemic came 100 years after the Spanish flu of 1918, we are more exposed now to a new one – or two, or three – within our lifespans.

The behaviour of political leaders has been exposed in the media and many will have to be made accountable for reckless negligence or outright genocide of their people. The value of science as the most powerful resource of humanity is in clear focus.

This pandemic will set many of humanity’s priorities right and may morph into the apocalyptic vision of the secrets that will make sense of our realities.

Two Travelers: Maria Graham (1785-1842) and Lady Florence Dixie (1885-1905)

In the 19th century, British women began to travel far and wide in pursuit of scientific and geographical knowledge, recording their observations of plants and minerals, animals, and humans, and, importantly, writing down their observations, painting the new landscapes, narrating their experiences, and, importantly, making them public. Marianne North (1830 – 1890), for example, who spent time in South America, was a prolific biologist and botanical artist, notable for her plant and landscape paintings, and plant discoveries, all of which are housed in the North Gallery at Kew Gardens.

However, for some time it was assumed that women had played no part in the emergence of modern science. Recent research is overturning the simplistic view that early science was an exclusively masculine enterprise. We now know that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were many women who not only took a keen interest in scientific debates and pursuits but also actively contributed to those debates and to the production of scientific knowledge. This is the case of Maria (Dundas) Graham (later Lady Callcott), who travelled extensively with her father and later her husband, James Graham, a ship captain who died on board his ship on their way to Chile. Throughout her travels, Graham assiduously collected plants, insects, rocks and minerals, and these specimens were subsequently shared with experts at home. Her most significant contribution to geology came when she experienced a major earthquake in Chile in 1822. Graham published her observations of the quake and its aftermath in 1824 in the *Transactions of the Geological Society*. The first article by a woman to appear in the journal, Graham's report supported the 'Vulcanist' theory that earthquakes could cause the elevation of landmasses—a view which was challenged and attacked as foolish, implying that a woman could not possibly report such a terrifying event accurately, though later she was acknowledged as having been correct—by Charles Darwin. Recent research has shown that Graham was both a competent geological fieldworker and theoretically well-informed. Additionally, in Chile she is commemorated as the first person to write about the new

Chilean nation in English, thus gaining Chile wider public recognition.

The idea of "adventure" and "exploring" are the keys to Lady Florence Dixie's South American travels. A writer and politically and socially committed feminist, Dixie's most well-known work is her *Riding Across Patagonia*. A Victorian Equestrian Adventure – and though of a different nature from Maria Graham's more specifically scientific writings, her descriptions of people, animals and places make it a unique narrative. With herself as the protagonist (she was the only woman, but her husband and brother did go along too), her woman's views, perspectives, humour, and keen observations, make the book a classic of its kind.

Why would Florence Dixie choose Patagonia, the land of the Giants? The book's first chapter opens: "Patagonia! Who would ever think of going to such a place? Why, you will be eaten up by cannibals!" She explains: "Precisely because it was such an outlandish place. Palled for the moment with civilisation and its surroundings, I wanted to be as far removed from them as possible". She rides away, fleeing Victorian society.

On the voyage out they stop at Rio, "every tree clothed with luxuriant creepers, purple and scarlet blossomed" – but the lovely city is under a "miasma – the annual scourge" of yellow fever. "To exorcise the demon... the scrubbing brush and Windsor soap... the only witch-craft needed". She is not impressed by Monte Video, where she doesn't disembark. Her brother does, and spends 3 miserable days quarantined on an ugly, rocky island outside the harbour. Once in Argentina, the travellers all become extremely fond of the "yerba maté", - no more tea or coffee!

One of the first Europeans to ride Criollo horses, even galloping through fire, Dixie's book is filled with closely observed descriptions of land and people. At the end, Florence, and her dog Pucho reunited, she thinks back on her explorer life, to places "where no mortal foot had ever trod before me"; earthquakes, scorching sun, wild horses; the Cordillera, guanaco-stalking, pumas, ñandú hunting, chorlitos, indians...

Really worth reading.



The Walk

We came over the ridge as the sun was rising. A vast river of humanity moving towards San Juan de los Lagos. Tens of thousands of pilgrims on their way to beseech or thank the Virgin at her shrine in this small town in central Mexico.

I'd been on the road for nine days since leaving San Miguel one morning in late January. I hiked around the lake in the wee small hours and joined the main body of the pilgrimage, a huge swarm of people from all over the country, many from as far away as Mexico City. Some had been on the road for twenty days and more. Most were regulars, whole families celebrating an annual ritual that gave meaning to their lives. We walked for ten hours a day across open fields, through valleys and over hills and mountains. The terrain was rough, stony, and dry. It got cold before dawn, but later on the sun beat down unmercifully. Dust caked my sweaty face, scratched my eyeballs, parched my throat. My knees hurt. But none of that mattered. The myriad concerns that usually occupied my thoughts were absent and my inner dialogue was still. Uncluttered as never before, my mind was alive with a new awareness.

Our first stop was at Xoconoxtle, where we made camp in the early afternoon along a dry riverbed, a great flock of pilgrims taking refuge from the heat of the day. Girls from the village came bearing delicious *gorditas de horno* and sweet *tamales*. Wiry children hovered around the tents and cooking fires, watching everything with sharp eyes while we rested. Shortly after midnight, stiff from the cold and lying on the hard ground, we were off again, our faces ghostly in the moonlight, the embers of a thousand fires glowing in the dark behind us.

By the fifth day the terrain had taken its toll and my knees were swollen and painful. I fashioned walking sticks from sturdy branches and limped on. A *curandera* offered to help, rubbing alcohol into my sore joints and muttering prayers to *Jesusito*. The pain abated enough to get some sleep but was back as soon as I re-joined the endless column of people snaking its way from one horizon to the other. There were makeshift food stalls here and there where I stopped for a cup of fresh orange juice, squeezed by hand, four pesos. Or a bowl of hot maize *atole*. Or a *caballito*, a mug of coffee with a shot of tequila for medicinal purposes.

Now, as we crested the ridge overlooking San Juan, a new energy was buzzing through the crowd; everyone was anxious to bring their journey to a climax. In a haze of pain and anticipation I hobbled into the basilica for an abbreviated mass, crammed together with my fellow pilgrims. The church was taking them in shifts, a few hundred at a time, and would continue to do so for the rest of the day. Standing shoulder to shoulder in the dusty crush of humanity, I heard a rushing in my ears and felt my head rise up towards the ceiling, bathed in the golden light filtering through the stained-glass windows. I heard none of the service, but when it was over, we all embraced one another, smiling and weeping. Barely aware of my physical body, I was swept along by the joyous throng surging through the large doors and spilling out into the courtyard. We walked past a pile of discarded crutches and walking sticks, hundreds of them lying in a disorderly heap. It was then I noticed that I was carrying my sticks across my shoulder and walking normally. My legs were stiff, but I felt no pain. I tossed my sticks onto the heap and laughed. Then I walked up the hill to catch the bus back home.



The Mercosur Summit

One single ship got stuck in the middle of the Suez Canal and it immediately affected world trade. One small bug hit a town in China and in very few months it turned into a pandemic.

We no longer live (if ever that was the case) in an isolated country, which is also part of an isolated region. The idea that whatever happens in the world reaches Uruguay 30 years later, had its moment and with some mocking irony tried to show that we lived in a paradise apart from the rest. That is not so anymore.

The clash between the presidents of Uruguay and Argentina last week was an example of how much Uruguay needs to be interconnected not only to the neighbourhood but to the rest of the world. Perhaps more to the rest of the world than to the neighbourhood.

The creation of Mercosur 30 years ago was a courageous step that helped open the country to wider markets. Uruguay, being a country with a rather small population needed to place its products elsewhere and the agreement reached with its three neighbours was a magnificent opportunity.

But that blessing only lasted for a short period. Brazil's crisis in 1999 dragged Argentina first in 2001 and Uruguay a little later in 2002 and much of what had been settled through Mercosur was no longer valid.

In the following years, Mercosur became a political club more than some kind of free trade zone or common market, and that had disturbing consequences.

Though in the years that Uruguay was governed by the Frente Amplio, there was an ideological understanding with Argentina and Brazil, both president Tabaré Vázquez and President José Mujica were quite aware that something was not working well and it was undermining Uruguay's interests. In different occasions they demanded a substantial change.

The possibility of making better deals by its own, was something that Uruguay's partners were not willing to concede.

It is also true that in both his administrations Vazquez sought for good trade agreements (the one with the US is well remembered, as is also the beginning of negotiations with TiSA) but found strong opposition not only in the Mercosur but also in his own party, the Frente Amplio that was reluctant to any kind of free trade agreements.

When Luis Lacalle Pou and his coalition took over in 2020, things started to change. It was quite evident that Uruguay needed to open up to new markets with lower tariffs. Other countries had reached better agreements and were getting ahead of us. While Uruguay hesitates, time and markets are lost; no country can afford such a situation.

The episode lived in the recent Mercosur summit was far more relevant than the noise it made. Uruguay, through president Lacalle's speech, gave an important step forward. The answer he got from Argentina's president Alberto Fernández simply showed that it won't be an easy task.

But there is no way back.

With patience and wisdom, Uruguay will have to work a way out of this trap. With or without Mercosur, which is not an easy option.

If the decision is to stay inside Mercosur, it should imply a deep and fundamental change in its rules. Leaving Mercosur, on the other hand, means a complicated negotiation in order to step out of the organization in the best possible way. Brexit is an example of how such a process can be really more complicated than what it looks like.

What happened in the last virtual summit should not be just another anecdote. Rather, it should be the beginning of a new road in search of better markets and more convenient agreements.

Aussie English: an Americanised variety of English?

It may be the smallest continent, but Australia is the 6th largest country after Russia, and the 10th biggest English-speaking population with over 20 million speakers. Its name comes from Latin “australis”, which means “southern”, though its English linguistic history is very much tied to the north.

The island was first sighted by a European in 1606, the famous Dutch navigator Willem Jansz made the first recorded landfall at the Pennefather River on the western shore of Cape York in Queensland, near what is now the town of Weipa. In 1770 Captain James Cook arrived at the coast of Australia and claimed the land as the “British Colony of New South Wales”. Britain needed to build up new colonies in part because Britain’s prisons were overcrowded, so in 1779 the House of Commons recommended that a penal settlement should be established in what was known as “New Holland”, and on 13 May 1787, the First Fleet left for Australia, and their arrival eight months later marked the establishment of the first British penal colony.

Most of the first Britons who arrived at Port Jackson in 1788 were convicts from London. Their settlement was called “Sydney” after Viscount Sydney, the highest colonial official of Australia. It was in this very settlement, where the development of Australian English began. In the time of the penal colony many Irish convicts and Catholic priests and nuns landed in Australia, bringing with them their Hiberno-English. Its inheritance includes the use of “youse” (as the plural of “you”), “good onya” (as “good on you”), and the replacement of “my” by “me” as in “Where’s me hat?” instead of “Where’s my hat?”.

As you can imagine, the new kids on the block had to learn quite a few new local words to be able to refer to animals, plants, and places. It has been thoroughly studied that in situations where one culture takes over or comes in contact with another, flora and fauna vocabulary is immediately adopted (it is not worth spending time and energy making up names for things that already have one!). In what is known as the first dictionary of Australian English,

E.E. Morris (1898) wrote: “there never was an instance in history when so many new names were needed, and that there never will be such an occasion again, for never did settlers come, nor can they ever again come, upon Flora and Fauna so completely different from anything seen by them before”.

The Aussie variety has evolved over 200 years and continues to change in concert with sociocultural forces. Over the past fifty years, there have been a series of changes. In terms of its syntax (changes in tense, aspect, and modality), it is less advanced than in American English but more than British English. When it comes to phonology, Australian English remains closer to British English. And it is precisely how Australians sound that makes us tell which English they speak. In fact, the vowel sounds are the ones doing the heavy lifting in setting this variety apart from the many other Englishes in the world.

In the last years, Australians have expressed their views and opinions on what they see as “an American influence”. The Americanisation hypothesis has historical facts to back it up. For instance, in the 1850s many gold rushers came from the US. Later, there was also contact with US soldiers during WWII. The immigration of Americans could have caused an Americanisation of Australian English to a certain extent. Locals argue that media with content from the US affects Australian language more and more. For example: some Australians use the word “truck” instead of the British “lorry”, and “jail” instead of “gaol”.

Many Australians see the American influence as a threat to their way of speech, but linguistic research does not support this. In fact, it has shown that American English is not taking over the traditional Australian uses. The uses that are adopted from American English often fill a gap, and are part of the informal style or slang, with only a few found in the more formal end of the spectrum. In sum, Australian English might be Americanised to some extent, but it is definitely not being taken by storm by American English!



The British Cluster of Río Negro

The British in the colonies tended to gather in clusters or hubs, in the cities, towns and camp alike. Understandable when they were usually amid thousands or even millions of natives, in the case of India, that could be dangerous; even in the case of Uruguay where the natives were friendly the problem of assimilation was ever present and something to avoid. The cantonment was the answer in the cities or medium size villages, but for those living in the middle of nowhere, the family hubs were the answer to artificially build an amicable place in a strange and foreign land.

There were many British farmers in upcountry Uruguay, landowners, and managers of British owned farms. Cattle ranchers in the South and Southwest of the country while the sheep farms were generally in the rockier lands of the North. An example of a family concentration are the Greens around the Cufré river in San José and Colonia; but I'll refer to the big British cluster of Río Negro which attracted like a magnet several families which ended up covering a great part of that very fertile region.

This is an historical column, but in this case, we must start with a family myth which if true to the family, who are we to disbelieve? The story begins with Alexander Stirling in XVIII Scotland, a land that has been torn apart by the Jacobite rebellion; but Stirling is a happy man as he has found the love of his life, Katherine Erskine. There is only one problem, John is a cabinetmaker from the Highlands and a catholic whose family backed Bonnie Prince Charles during the rebellion. Katherine's family on the other hand stayed loyal to the English Crown and are Anglican and can even claim an heir to the throne. To make matters worse she lives in the more sophisticated Lowlands. Somehow, they get married in secret, and with money from Alexander's family they narrowly avoid being caught by the Erskine's while embarking to South America. There is supposed to be a thriller style persecution to the coast after the wedding, but fact is that when the young and daring couple leave, they already have two kids. Their first destination is Rio de Janeiro where their older son, David dies of yellow fever

reason for their move to Buenos Aires. By now David II is born and him being bullied at school is enough reason for their final move to Uruguay, because by now Alexander Stirling has savings enough to buy land in Río Negro, probably with financial help of another Briton who they have met in Buenos Aires, the entrepreneur Robert Young. They both form a society and buy what will become the "*Bichadero*" farm, but also start the Stirling/Young dynasty that will slowly but steadily attract more British to the region, and to the family.

Alexander Stirling has ten surviving children and one of the daughters will marry a son of Robert Young, who has other eight kids. All of them will stay to work and live in the region, while getting married with more British men and woman who quickly begin to arrive. Daniel Cash will be one of the first who will marry Aminta Stirling and have nine kids. Just as an anecdote, Daniel and Aminta had several great grandkids with Cash Cash surnames as their cousin grandkids were married; obviously, all of them staying in Río Negro, dividing land or more frequently buying more so that the British territory grew with each generation.

David Stirling II and Diego Stirling married Isabel and Maria Luisa MacDougall from Entre Ríos. Roberto Stirling married Matilde Mundell, daughter of a local Colorado Party warlord. This ends the first generation of the Stirling clan, the other four kids having married with natives, with fourteen kids amongst them. If we would refer to the next generation, of which we already mentioned the Cash Cash's we would find marriages with Mac Eachen's, Lawlor's, McKay's, Bridgers, Symonds and all the combinations amongst these lineages as practically every member of all these families stayed and worked the land; the Mac Eachen's being an exception.

To end this story, when Alexander Stirling and Katherine Erskine are old, after dividing all the lands among their descendants, they decide also to leave a special gift to each of their more than fifty grandkids. The amount allotted for each will be £100, not bad considering they left Scotland with absolutely nothing.



Faith

There are words that because of misplaced usage over the centuries have acquired a perverse, misleading meaning.

We often use them without thinking and without reflecting on some aspects of their nature.

One of them is 'black'. When something is lily white it can't possibly be less pure and noble. But black... just think of black thoughts, having a black future, it's all bad. After so many years of racism and colonialism the word took a definite evil meaning.

Something similar happened to the word faith. Having faith is positive and desirable, those who lack faith or who have lost it, are in serious trouble, deprived of something so precious, that makes life worth living.

When someone is described as faithless it means that person is not trustworthy, a rather evil and dangerous individual.

But what is really faith? It is the belief in things you cannot prove, it's a mental leap that makes one accept and wholeheartedly endorse something that has no basis in perceptible, clear, indisputable, verifiable reality.

As we dig deeper into the meaning of the word and the consequences of adopting such an attitude to people and life, it not only becomes an irrational and emotional manifestation but also a means for terrible deeds or for some to take advantage of others.

The former has led to horrible crimes in the history of mankind in the name of irrational belief or faith, nobody has ever been killed because of a rational and measured evaluation of the goodness of such a decision, murderous actions are the result of emotional, irrational, unthinking drives, individual or collective, that often after the fact, are somehow justified by spurious and apparently well argued motives.

The latter also often renders us helpless and at the

mercy of people who benefit from our beliefs, all the time assuring us that it will all work out well for us, but only if we don't lose faith in whatever they tell us or is written somewhere.

Science and technology are not based on faith but on a rational, sober, rigorous, unyielding methodology that accepts only what can be proved beyond any reasonable doubt, at least, for the moment, as far as our current knowledge goes.

They have led us to the current level of comfort and high standard of living, that nobody would want to give up.

But the same people who benefit from such a state of affairs, they often build up their interpretation of reality on faith, in clear contradiction to what has brought us to today's world and its endless possibilities that has nothing to do with faith and consists of asserting things and then trying to challenge them to the utmost possible limit, just the opposite of what we understand as faith.

He who has a strong faith of a metaphysical nature, at the same time, if he doesn't want to lose all he has, is very careful in his business dealings not to go by just what he is told by others.

It is a curious dichotomy that involves two entirely different approaches to life that curiously, are held by the same person that at the same time, denies any basic contradiction in his attitude.

Why is faith still so pervasive and entrenched in our minds and speech, is it because of fear of the unknown or an inability to face hardship, serious mishaps or an uncertain future with a rational and serene attitude?

I wonder when or if we will ever reach the time when the word faith becomes a suspect and outdated term, something to avoid, replacing it in our everyday life by the safer and more reasonable word 'trust', less irrational and prone to excess of various and often terrible kinds.



Mediterranean Style Grouper (Mero)

by Phillip Berzins
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Purchasing fresh fish in Uruguay is generally not an easy task. When I first arrived in Uruguay in the mid eighties and opened my own restaurant, Le Gavroche, I spent five years visiting Buceo port (Puerto del Buceo) almost every day in pursuit of fresh fish. It proved to be not the most inspiring of tasks but one that required a high level of patience and a trained eye.

However, it is possible to find wonderfully fresh fish in Uruguay, especially in the coastal resorts of the Atlantic Ocean in Maldonado and Rocha. One fish which is often overlooked is the grouper, known in Uruguay as Mero. It can be found fresh in the autumn and winter months, but it can be purchased frozen all year round in one of the main supermarket chains of Uruguay.

The grouper has a mild flavour between sea bass and halibut with a light sweetness to it. It is prized for its moist meat that easily flakes into chunks once cooked. Due to this subtle taste the grouper is a blank canvas that will support strong flavours during its preparation, hence the following recipe with Mediterranean undertones to it.

**For any queries or questions,
please contact me via e-mail at
sbpperzins@hotmail.com.**

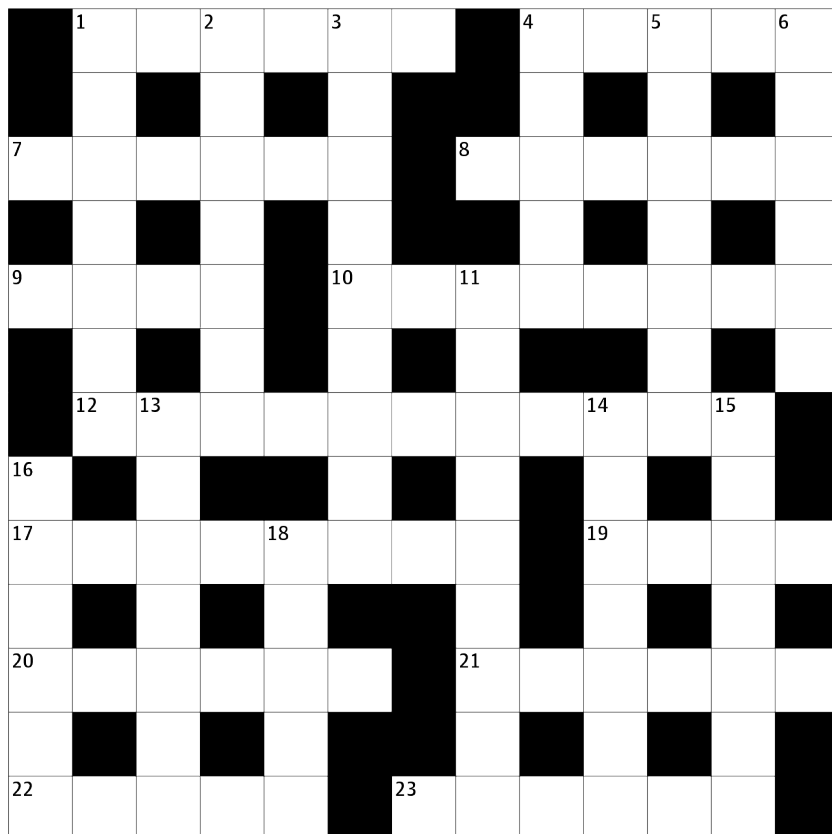
Ingredients

For 2 portions

- 500 g grouper fillets
- 1 tb sp dried oregano
- 1 tea sp sweet paprika
- Salt and pepper
- 5 garlic cloves crushed into a puree
- 2 tb sp finely chopped red onion
- Juice of one lemon
- 50 ml olive oil
- 10 cherry tomatoes cut in half
- 8 black olives cut in half
- 2 tb sp chopped parsley

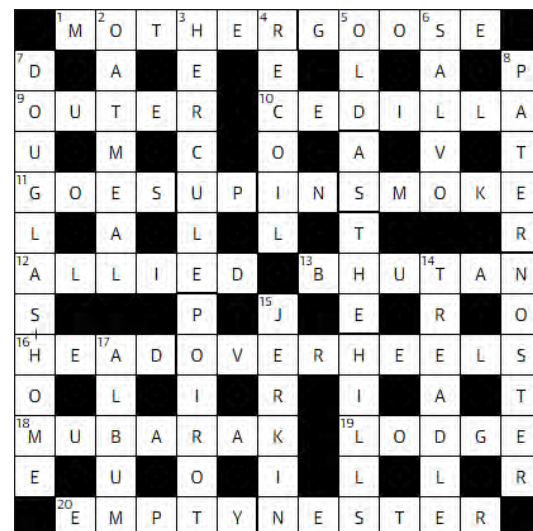
Method

1. Pat fish dry and season with oregano, sweet paprika, salt and pepper, garlic puree, lemon juice and olive oil. Turn it over and repeat seasoning and let marinate for an hour or two.
2. Place fish on a pre-heated and lightly oiled baking tray and add cherry tomatoes and olives on top of the fish fillets along with any of the remaining juices.
3. Pour a little more olive oil over the top if necessary and place tray in a pre-heated oven at its hottest temperature and let it cook for between 10-15 minutes until the thickest part of the fish flakes when pulled apart with two forks. Take care not to overcook as there is nothing worse than dried, chewy fish.
4. Sprinkle with the parsley and enjoy with boiled potatoes and fresh seasonal vegetables.



Print this page and start playing!
Solution in the next Contact issue.

March solution:



Across

- 1 Immature (6)
- 4 Finish (3,2)
- 7 Debacle (6)
- 8 Extreme aversion (6)
- 9 Sandwich-maker (4)
- 10 Disregard (8)
- 12 Cosset (11)
- 17 Fairground attraction (3,5)
- 19 Bridge (4)
- 20 Inception (6)
- 21 Antagonism (6)
- 22 Loose (5)
- 23 Under the influence (of drink or drugs) (6)

Down

- 1 Professional outfit (7)
- 2 Calming (7)
- 3 First version of a new product (9)
- 4 Escort (5)
- 5 Force to take part (7)
- 6 Stunts (6)
- 11 Lent me oil (anag) — it's soothing (9)
- 13 Unfinished (7)
- 14 My Old Man's job (7)
- 15 Successfully demanded (7)
- 16 Take in (6)
- 18 Alarming — unshaven (5)

LAMB CHOPS

by Jonathan Lamb
vozinglesa@gmail.com

Lord of The Dense

MEETING AGENDA

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MATTERS ARISING
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
CORRESPONDANCE

Dance, dance, wherever you may be;
But should you then correspond with me,
Dense, dense, dense as I may be,
I know that correspondence is spelled with an E.





World Coal Carrying Championship in Gawthorpe

Gawthorpe is a village to the north of Ossett in the City of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England. It is roughly midway between Wakefield and Dewsbury north of the A638.

Gawthorpe hosts the World Coal Carrying Championships. It also gives its name to the Gawthorpe seam of coal, which stretches from the village down through Horbury and Craggstone. The Championships were originally run from the Shaw Cross colliery to the May Pole, although the collieries in this area all closed in the Robens era.

This annual test of endurance sees people racing up to the village maypole whilst carrying sacks of coal on their shoulders. For the men the sacks weigh 50 kg/1cwt and for the women 20kg, while the children carry sacks weighing 10kg. The course is 1km long ending at the village green and it's a serious effort to get there – expect the race to last around 5 minutes for the leaders with exhausted competitors by the finish. The first race took place in the 1960s and it's one of those modern traditions started by someone having a brainwave at the pub – as Gawthorpe is right in the coalfield area it seems an appropriate location, though the collieries have gone.





How to grow food in an urban jungle

Building flourishing farms in the heart of cities used to be just a utopian fantasy. Now it's an important step towards developing a smart, diversified food system capable of feeding a growing world population.



DILBERT

by Scott Adams
<https://dilbert.com/>





Happy Easter!

