



THE BRITISH SOCIETY  
IN URUGUAY  
FOUNDED 1918

# CONTACT

AUGUST 2021



The British Society in Uruguay  
**Literary Tea**

Montevideo Players  
**Winter Quiz Night**

Medical Column  
**Is Facebook Killing People?**

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BSU CONTACT NEWSLETTER



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Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear Members,  
So, July has gone by, and with it the winter holidays, and its back to school for the younger ones. We implore everyone to please take special precautions if you have travelled abroad and apply a logical and responsible quarantine. We have heard several cases of families been infected, and we wish them all a safe recovery. Fortunately, national COVID numbers are thinning out and Uruguay is reaching a yellow level by the Harvard Index, but it's up to all of us to keep this up.

On another note, what a winter! It has been some time since we had some seriously cold weather, we had snow in Villa Serrana, Montevideo had some slouchy rain, and the regular flue isn't helping. The VRS virus (very common this time of the year) is testing the hospitals capacities. So our true support to the British Hospital and all hospitals for their tremendous works and efforts.

What's new with us? The Executive committee has been focusing on all that boring bureaucratic paperwork that these types of societies need. The DGI information has been updated, BPS documents as well, the accounting system is being updated for a better control, and banking operations are being optimized to be more efficient. This is all so very exciting and entertaining, so I will leave it at this just to keep you all hoping for more.

Soon some changes will appear on our website. We are looking to get all the British organizations linked in hoping to really potentiate all information between us. We are always looking for new and better experiences for our members, and in this Covid era, our options are limited, so we are looking to join forces and create new stuff!

Folks, that's all for now, until the next time! Take care and see you soon.

Kind regards,

Colin Shearer  
President



# Birthdays

in August

|                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 01 ~ Christopher R. Prevett  | 17 ~ Malena N. Mendioroz      |
| 01 ~ Madeleine F. Pool       | 17 ~ Lucía N. Mendioroz       |
| 03 ~ Vivian L. Wilson        | 18 ~ Andrew E. Beare          |
| 04 ~ Santiago R. Theoduloz   | 20 ~ Elvira N. Blanco         |
| 05 ~ Jane M. Silverwood      | 20 ~ Laura N. Bertini         |
| 06 ~ David E. Rennie         | 20 ~ Kim M. Davies            |
| 06 ~ Silvana L. Pérez        | 21 ~ Theodor J. Funch-Thomsen |
| 07 ~ Patricia E. Prevett     | 21 ~ Richard A. Davies        |
| 07 ~ Clara M. Hobbins        | 21 ~ Andrew M. Grierson       |
| 08 ~ Philip R. Lennan        | 22 ~ Richard N. Hobbins       |
| 09 ~ Mariana N. Billotto     | 24 ~ Margaret I. Waterston    |
| 12 ~ María L. Vera           | 24 ~ Gloria M. Trelles        |
| 12 ~ Nathalie N. Rippe       | 24 ~ Monica P. Prevett        |
| 13 ~ Kenneth G. Coates       | 24 ~ Philippe J. Sauval       |
| 13 ~ Clara M. Rymer          | 25 ~ Martín N. Villar         |
| 13 ~ Valeria N. Martínez     | 26 ~ Emily S. Symonds         |
| 14 ~ Juan-Carlos N. Chambers | 28 ~ Richard W. Ferrand       |
| 14 ~ Timothy G. Pearson      | 28 ~ Alejandra . Guerra       |
| 15 ~ Mariana N. Abó          | 28 ~ Adriana N. Romero        |
| 16 ~ María S. Reyes          | 29 ~ Roberto J. Mountford     |
| 17 ~ Dorothy M. Adkins       | 31 ~ Raquel N. Herrera        |





Highland cows are often known as the gentle giants of Scotland. They have distinctive horns and long, wavy, woolly coats that can be a range of colours, including red, ginger, black, dun, yellow, white, grey, tan, silver and brindle.

They are raised primarily for their meat, which is growing in popularity due to being lower in cholesterol than other forms of beef.

These cattle are a hardy breed, designed to withstand the conditions in the Scottish Highlands. Their long hair is actually an unusual double coat of hair- on the outside is the oily outer hair, the longest of any cattle breed, and it is covering a downy undercoat underneath. The bulls can weigh up to a whopping 800kg, and the cows up to 500kg, and their milk generally has a very high butterfat content.

Stay safe,

Geoffrey W Deakin  
Editor



## MEMBERSHIP FEES

Please update your membership status by paying your annual membership fee, which is currently set at \$700 per year.

[Please click here if you wish to send us a message.](#)

You can make a bank transfer (or direct deposit via Abitab or Redpagos) 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 ([treasurer@britsoc.org.uy](mailto:treasurer@britsoc.org.uy)) a copy of the transfer/deposit slip.

**Once this is done, your membership will be updated.**



**Once this is done, your membership will be updated.**





## Happy Birthdays at the Home

This month we had two very special birthdays to celebrate. On July 19th happy birthday was sung to Sylvia Vignoles Sherwood who has had to temporarily give up gardening while recovering from an arm injury at the Home. However, Sylvia is still working at her renown oil paintings and playing bridge with Joan, Valerie and Kenn.

On July 20th, Vivi Miles Sienna, had her 100th birthday!!! With her witty sense of humour Vivi has knitted more baby cardigans for charity than anyone can remember. She and Joan have been friends since childhood in Progreso and have recently been sharing reminiscences.

Two of her children, Rosario, and Isabel, were able to visit Vivi and enjoy the celebration, while Magdalena and Daniel, unable to be present, congratulated her by phone.





# LITERARY TEA



## TEA PLEASE

"EACH CUP OF TEA REPRESENTS AN  
IMAGINARY VOYAGE"  
CATHERINE DOUZEL

### TODAY SELECTION BLENDS

#### N° 2 - EARL GREY & ROSES

BLACK TEA, BERGAMOT OIL, ROSES

#### N° 6 - JOSEPHINE

GREEN TEA, DANDELION, CEDRON,  
CHAMOMILE, FENNEL, LAVENDER, ROSES







## Tree Planting with Uruguayan Authorities

Throughout the month of July, Ambassador Faye O'Connor attended a number of ceremonies to plant some of the 95 Ibirapitá trees gifted by the Embassy, in commemoration of the 95th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. These included joining President Luis Lacalle Pou and his wife to plant the tree gifted to the President in the

Presidential Residence Garden. Ambassador O'Connor also took the opportunity to visit the interior and plant trees with the Mayors of Canelones, Maldonado, Lavalleja and Rocha, visiting landmarks and key organisations in addition to the ceremonies.

## STUDY IN THE UK

with a fully funded  
Chevening Scholarship



## Chevening Scholarships Applications Opening Soon!

Applications for a Chevening scholarship, giving students the opportunity to study a fully funded master's degree in the UK in 2022-23, will open on 3 August. We will be conducting online and in-person information sessions, so stay tuned to our social media for dates! Seven Chevening scholars are currently getting ready to depart for the UK in

early September after successfully completing the selection process. Another seven young Uruguayan professionals are now finalising their studies thanks to this scheme, funded by the Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office together with ANII, Pfeffer Family Foundation and Cone Marshall.





## Trees Celebrating Ties

The Embassy asked for suggestions from members of the public on where to plant trees, selecting seven based on our shared links. Three of these have already been planted. Delta El Tigre wanted to celebrate ties with the Falkland Islands, after a local student had the chance to visit in 2020 and shared her love for the islands with her community. A rural school in San Jorge, Durazno and Train Station Peñarol also planted trees marking their British heritage.

Follow us online: [www.gov.uk/fcdo](http://www.gov.uk/fcdo)



Embajada Británica  
Montevideo

## LAMB CHOPS

by Jonathan Lamb  
[vozinglesa@gmail.com](mailto:vozinglesa@gmail.com)

### The Axolotl

I'm an alcoholic  
Axolotl  
I like my whisky  
From the botl  
(And not a litl  
But rather a lotl)

Slumped at the bar  
Of my traveller's hotl  
I write sad poems  
In Axolotl  
My verse may be worse  
Than Aristotl  
It may make you curse  
And want to throtl  
This agonising  
Axolotl

But there'll come a day  
When I'm healthy, notl,

And the peasants who say  
I should be shotl  
Sit in their homes  
Of daub and watl  
Tapping their clay pipes  
Free of dotl

And boast that they once  
Had a drink in a hotl  
With that famous poet  
The Axolotl

He likes his whisky  
From the botl  
(And not a litl  
But rather a lotl)

That axolotl  
Is no teetotl







# ONLINE CONFERENCE INVITATION

**WEDNESDAY  
4<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST  
13:00 HRS**

DOCTOR  
**SERGIO ABREU**



**MERCOSUR:  
BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY**

**MORE INFORMATION**



**WWW.CUB.UY**





**The Council of Christ Church is pleased to announce...**

# **Beginning Sunday, August 15 11am Sunday Services onsite and online**

**We will continue on ZOOM as “normal”**

**We will be present with protocols in CC.**

**We will have space for up to forty people in the chapel,**

**Ten children in Wonderland (Children return on August 8th)**

**The protocols include spacing, handwashing, masks, sign-ins, etc.**

**Next week we will send reminders with details.**

**Please, email questions via the website.**



**Christ  
Church**  
MONTEVIDEO

**Arocena 1907**

**Esq. Lieja, Carrasco**

**Tel 2601 0300**

**[contact@christchurchmvd.org](mailto:contact@christchurchmvd.org)**

**[www.christchurchmvd.org](http://www.christchurchmvd.org)**

It is with great pleasure that we announce the reopening of our beloved Dr. Alberto Gallinal Heber Library!

We have now relocated, and can be found on the ground floor of the building, where the Anglo Theatre is also located.

We are glad to announce that, as of 2021, the Library has become part of the Anglo Theatre Cultural Centre. This presents endless opportunities for our members and visitors to have the best British cultural experience at the Anglo. We will keep you updated on our latest news.

Become a member to get access to a great variety of English literature and language resources. Our Library has more than 15.000 volumes, including books, DVDs and magazines.

We have put strict measures in place to ensure the safety of our staff and users, including physical distancing and measures such as booking in advance.

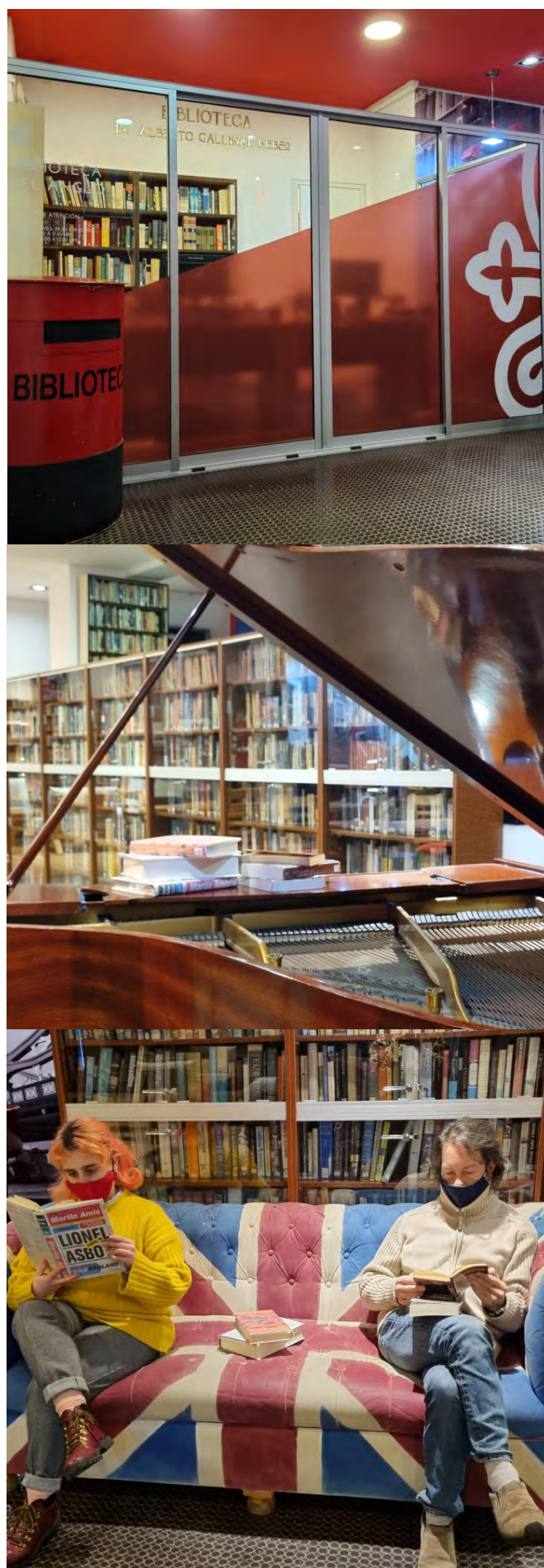
**BSU members get a special annual membership fee:**

**Annual membership - \$1000**

**Annual membership + Home delivery (4 shipments per year) - \$2500**

For more information, please contact us at [biblioteca@anglo.edu.uy](mailto:biblioteca@anglo.edu.uy) or 29023773 ext. 1127

We hope to see you soon.





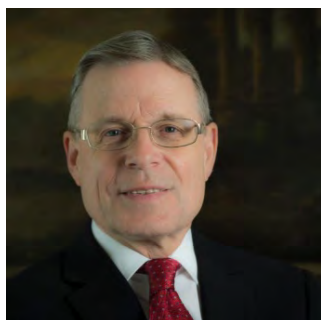
## The Royal Family and The Crown (Netflix)



The Anglo-Uruguayan Cultural Institute presents **"The Royal Family and The Crown"**, a talk by royal commentator Richard Fitzwilliams (UK).

How accurate is the portrayal of it? What is the purpose of the British royal family and what is its future likely to be?

In this provocative talk he looks at how its major characters have been portrayed, how true to fact this is and whether this series has damaged the reputation of the royals at home and abroad. He will also comment on and take questions about the purpose of the royal family and its future including the current rift with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.



### About the presenter:

**Richard Fitzwilliams** is a royal commentator, film critic and public relations consultant and has reviewed the Netflix series *The Crown*. He has given 1,000 television interviews, being used by CNN for 20 years and also a great many on radio. He has covered numerous royal events live, including Prince Philip's funeral, Harry and Meghan's wedding, he has written numerous articles and taken part in debates about the monarchy and its future.

**Saturday 21st August at 10 am**  
(Local time in Uruguay)

**Get your ticket at:**

<https://redtickets.uy/>

**Members of the Anglo Library /  
British Society: \$ 225**  
**General public: \$300**

The speaker is happy to answer  
questions after the talk



## Ibirapitá Tree

All of us at the Anglo were deeply honoured to receive one of the 95 Ibirapitá trees that the British Embassy gave to institutions in Uruguay to commemorate the Queen's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday and as a sign of their commitment to caring for the environment.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July we planted the tree in The Anglo School sports field in Camino Carrasco, where it will stand as a testament to our strong bonds with the UK and the British culture. Faye O'Connor joined members of the Anglo board of governors, school authorities, staff and students at the sports field to plant the tree and mark the occasion. This Ibirapitá tree will see our students grow over the years as it provides them with shade and protection.

We would like to thank the British Embassy for giving us one of the 95 Ibirapitá trees as a symbol of the historic friendship that unites Uruguay and the United Kingdom.



*"One of the two fields that our students and their families can already enjoy to play football and rugby." (The photo on the right was taken before COVID-19 pandemic)*





## THE MONTEVIDEO PLAYERS SOCIETY

PRESENTS

# WINTER QUIZ NIGHT

SUNDAY 15TH AUGUST – 18 HS  
ONLINE, VIA "ZOOM"

Hello everyone!

Winter is here, and so is our Winter Quiz! Finally, an event we can share while at home & wrapped in a cosy blanket. This time brought to you by **The Turncoats**.

**Book your spot using [this link](#).**

Once again, we'll be having a virtual Quiz- Participants will connect to a Zoom meeting (we will send the link closer to the Quiz's date) and the Organisers will put each team into a different "room". This way, each team will have a private conversation to discuss the answers.

Each paper will come as a link, which will take you to a Smartsheet form, where you'll find the questions and can fill in the answers.

As the previous one, the requirements to participate are the following:

- Form a team of 4-5
- Have a strong internet connection

It is also advised that the team create a WhatsApp group with the participants, so that they can communicate through there in case their connection to our Zoom meeting fails.

**Get your team of up to 5 organised and read the booking and payment instructions carefully.**

1. You book your spot using the link above.
2. We confirm the request via email and include a payment link through Mercado Pago. Remember that the Colectivo is no longer a valid option.
3. You pay within 72 hours of receipt of our email.
4. We validate your reservation.
5. You connect to the Zoom link on Sunday, August 15h at 17:30 hs (so that we can start at 18:00hs) and have fun with us!

Pricing:

- Members: \$150
- Non-Members: \$250

**Save the date, stay safe and take care!**

Kind regards,  
The Committee

# The use of screens in children and adolescents

We provide you the opinion of specialists who can help us understand the effects of screen exposure and give us some tips for naturally handling this together with our children.

## Short-sightedness or myopia is on the rise

Short-sightedness is a very common eye condition that causes distant objects to appear blurred, while close objects can be seen clearly. The global prevalence of myopia is increasing rapidly. One of the theories that could explain this is the sharp rise in screen time among children. Cases of myopia has already affected up to 30% of some Asian populations, and between 50% and 60% of the population in the United States and still increasing.

The screen itself is not to be blamed but rather the eye strain that is required when using screens at close range which may account for the rise in myopia. In addition, excessive use of screens takes time away from children's time spent on outdoor activities which are known to help prevent the onset of myopia and its progression.

## How can it be avoided and what is the treatment?

Screens are not recommended for children under 3 years of age, and from that age up they should be used sparingly. Although the maximum amount of screen time to avoid these vision risks has not been established, it is advised that children and teenagers do not have more than 2 hours of screen time per day.

For patients who have had myopia progression for 3 months, a treatment with diluted atropine drops is available, which is indicated for patients where myopia progresses more than ½ point in 6 months. That is why we recommend that children wearing glasses or contact lenses have their eyes tested by a paediatric ophthalmologist every 6 months.

## What symptoms can be detected in a youngster who uses screens excessively?

We have seen an increase of symptoms such as red eyes, gritty eyes, and eye irritation. These are linked to a pathology we call "dry eye" in which excessive screen use has been found to decrease the eye's blink



rate by at least a half as well as its quality and range. This causes decreased tear production or increased tear evaporation which affects the precorneal tear film leading to dry eye symptoms.

Other types of symptoms, such as blurred vision, double vision, and difficulty focusing, have also been seen. These symptoms are related to the lack of balance from having strabismus, such as a convergence insufficiency; by having a crossed or turned eye, where the eyes have difficulty in focusing on objects closely, in these cases this can be solved with convergence exercises. However, there are other types of strabismus that include constant esotropia where the eyes are crossed ("crossed eyes") or intermittent exotropia, where the eyes diverge ("lazy eyes" or "wall eyes") and where surgery may be required in some cases.

## What does the 20-20-20 rule mean?

Basically, for every 20 minutes spent using a screen you should try to look away at something that is 20 feet away from you (i.e., 6 meters) for a total of 20 seconds. That is, your kids should look at something at a distance for about 20 seconds 2 or 3 times for every hour of screen time.



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dickens

 Face-to-face  
& online courses

New beginning:  
**AUGUST**

    
**@dickensuruguay**

## ALL ON BOARD AT DICKENS CHEERS!

At Dickens we are all back following strict rules issued by the Health Ministry to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Luckily these rules are quite natural by now and part of our daily life. All our staff has been vaccinated and hopefully all our students as well, excepting our children. Though we expect these will be too in due course.

Something very curious has happened. The students have never been so happy to return. They love being back with their teachers, their friends and Dickens as a whole, from the porter, the receptionists, the cleaning ladies and everyone that comes their way.

As regards parents the comments we hear are the following:

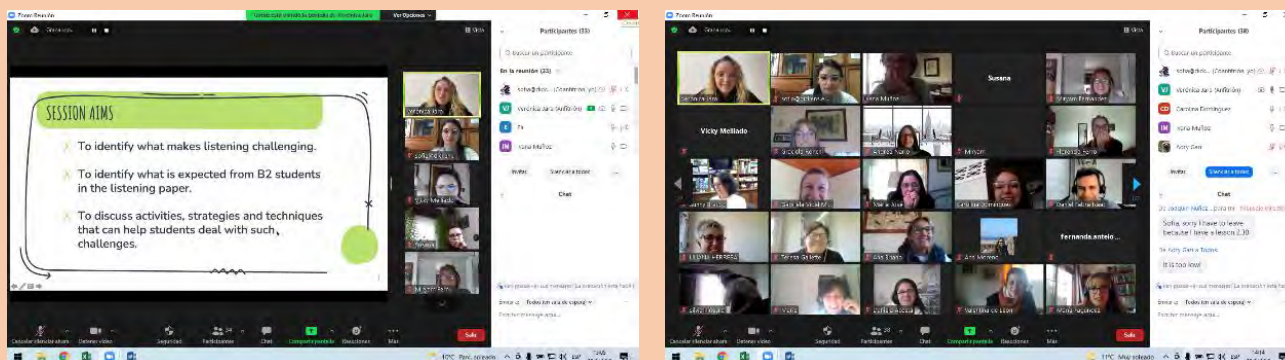
“Teachers have such patience”; “They work so hard and it's not easy”; “I am so glad my child is back, I had to help him such a lot”; “I am exhausted”.

Hurrah! The pandemic has taught parents and students to value teachers! At Dickens we are very happy that some good has come out of these very difficult times.





## DICKENS &amp; CAMBRIDGE WEBINARS

**August:**► **Developing speaking skills and strategies at B1/B2 levels (for students)**

Getting your students ready to communicate in real life? Invite your students to enjoy a different session where they will look at what they need to gain high scores in their speaking tests and will also receive tips to boost their performance.

- Wednesday 11 th August – B2 at 10:00 am
- Wednesday 11 th August – B1 at 17:30 pm
- Thursday 19 th August – B1 at 10:00 am
- Thursday 19 th August – B2 at 17:30 pm

**September:**

Developing listening skills and strategies at B2 level  
(for students)

Dos and Don'ts for international exams (for teachers  
& students)

**October:**

Q&A/FAQs sessions (for teachers & students)



For further information, please contact Veronica Jara: [veronicajara@dickens.edu.uy](mailto:veronicajara@dickens.edu.uy)



## Is Facebook Killing People?

On Friday 16 July, when asked about misinformation on COVID-19 vaccines on social media like Facebook, President Joe Biden didn't mince his words. **"They're killing people... Look, the only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated. And they're killing people"** – expressing his dismay and concern that the vaccination rate was slowing and pockets of vaccine-hesitant people in cities and states (predominantly in those which had favoured Donald Trump last November) were ripe for the spread of the now called Delta variant (which originated in India). The Delta variant is behind third and fourth waves in Israel, Asia, Europe, and North America (and, of course... we're next!). Social media, especially Facebook, which have been the platforms where both information and misinformation on vaccines has spread, in Biden's view, have not done enough to monitor what he and the CDC considered to be harmful – and ultimately – lethal. The day after the President's comment, CNN published a slide with the reasons why people don't get a COVID-19 vaccine: 51% are concerned about side effects; 48% mistrust; 35% don't believe they need it; 34% don't trust the Government and 27% will wait and see if it's safe. In a nutshell: lack of trust and fears about safety – fuelled to a great extent by the anti-vaccine movement.

A few days before, French President Emmanuel Macron cracked down on those not yet vaccinated. Short of excluding them from society, he set a 15 September deadline to decide which line of the vaccine the French want to be. Those unvaccinated won't be allowed to go to work (nor receive their salary), go to restaurants and other public venues, unless they pay out-of-pocket up to 49 Euros for a negative test. As the emergency-authorised vaccines are not yet 'approved', it's difficult to justify making them compulsory (as are tetanus and polio vaccines), although many healthcare organisations are requiring that workers with direct contact with patients be vaccinated, stating they're obligated to the safety of the patients that entrust their care to them. Uruguay is about to make available a GreenPass, which will enable those vaccinated (or negative-tested) to attend public events, especially those held

indoors.

The open discussion on the role of governments, free speech, the use of social media platforms and unrestricted movement of persons within and between cities, countries and travelling abroad is dialectically spinning beyond the coordinates we held as certain until 2019. The discussion is mute in those countries in which freedom from government control of speech, ideas and lives is less than Western ideals: North Korea, China, Iran, Russia, Venezuela, and Cuba would fall in this list.

Finger-pointing at Facebook and social media as cause-and-effect of deaths due to COVID-19 is maybe an exaggeration. Living in a free society is a luxury we should not take for granted. Open flow of information and opinions is the fluid that makes free societies viable, even if it opens a freeway for false, misleading, and harmful information. The same platforms can be used to counteract fake news with data and evidence, presented by credible officials, professionals, and influencers. Controlling social media is typical of autocracies and dictatorships. The shutdown of the internet by the Cuban government is an example of an extreme form of control, to prevent the dissemination of images of revolting people on the streets. Maybe some of these posts can be fake and taken from other countries and moments, as the Cuban government argued, but eliminating the internet is throwing out the baby together with the water – a typical behaviour of autocratic states.

What is killing people is the politicisation of the issues related to the pandemic. We've seen it in the USA, in Argentina and Brazil, to mention three nations close to our culture. Eventually, all governments (and to some extent, the 'shadow' oppositions) will be held accountable for how they handled a moving target like the pandemic. It may even cost ruling parties the next election, in spite of having done their chores relatively well (for example, Chile). We shouldn't forget what happened to Winston Churchill: the country was united behind him in WW2, and he was hailed a hero, but he lost the immediate election to the Labour Party.

**Let's not lose our freedoms as a consequence.**





## Alan Bennett (1934)

“I was born and brought up in Leeds, where my father was a butcher. As a boy, I sometimes went out on the bike delivering orders to customers, one of whom was a Mrs Fletcher. She had a daughter, Valerie, who went to London where she got a job with a publishing firm. She did well, becoming assistant to one of the directors, whom, though he was much older than she was, she eventually married. The firm was Faber and Faber, and the director was T.S. Eliot. So, there was a time when I thought my only connection with the literary world would be that I had delivered meat to T. S. Eliot “s mother-in-law.”

The story continues, when Bennett’s mother tells her son that she met Mrs Fletcher, who “was with a tall, elderly refined looking feller”- T. S. Eliot in fact.” I tried to explain to her the significance of the great poet, but without much success, *The Wasteland* not figuring very largely in Mam’s scheme of things.

“The thing is,” I said finally, “he won the Nobel Prize.”

“Well,” she said, with that unerring grasp of inessentials which is the prerogative of mothers, “I’m not surprised. It was a beautiful overcoat.”

There are hundreds of anecdotes of this kind in *Writing Home*, brilliantly perceptive, witty, intelligent pieces taken from Bennet “s journalism, book and theatre reviews and his diaries, where the famous and his Mam and Dad figure equally. After school in Leeds, Bennett attended Oxford University, where he studied history, staying on to teach and research medieval history for several years. His collaboration as writer and performer with Dudley Moore, Jonathan Miller and Peter Cook in the satirical revue *Beyond the Fringe* at the 1960 Edinburgh Festival brought him instant fame. He gave up academia, and turned to writing full-time, his first stage play, *Forty Years On*, produced in 1968. Works include plays such as *The Madness of George III* and its film adaptation, the series of monologues *Talking Heads*, and the play and subsequent film, *The History Boys*.

The unique *Talking Heads* monologues, first broadcast in 1988, were unusual. Just one camera, and a person speaking to it. Small changes of scene.

And words, in an actor’s mouth, conjuring up a life and a world. A fully peopled, entirely credible, hysterically funny, heart-breaking world.

Of Bennett’s prose fiction, *The Uncommon Reader* is one of my favourites. Here’s the opening:

“At Windsor it was the evening of the state banquet, and as the President of France took his place beside Her Majesty, the royal family formed up behind them.”

“Now that I have you all to myself,” said the Queen smiling, “I’ve been longing to ask you about the writer Jean Genet.”

“Ah,” said the President, “Oui.”

“Homosexual and jailbird, was he as bad as he was painted? Or, more to the point”-and she took up her soup spoon- “was he as good?”

Unbriefed on this subject, the President looked wildly about for his minister of culture. But she was being addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Jean Genet,” said the Queen helpfully “Il m “intéresse.”

“Vraiment?” The President put down his spoon. It was going to be along evening.

How the Queen became interested in a French novelist, playwright, poet, essayist, and political activist, is the story the brief novel tells: the Queen was led by her yapping corgis to the travelling library outside Buckingham Palace where a young man called Norman gets her involved with books. She becomes an avid reader, and, as in all of Bennett “s writing, there’s the subtle subtext beneath the humour: it isn’t really about the Queen at all. It “s about literature, the ultimate democracy.

In *The Lady in the Van*, now a Netflix-available film with Maggie Smith, Bennet writes about elderly, eccentric, Mary Shepherd who parked her van in his driveway in Camden Town, living there until her death 15 years later. Bennett learns her true identity: Margaret Fairchild, a gifted former pupil of pianist Alfred Cortot. Much of the dialogue is between two versions of Bennett – his “real self” and his “writer self”. His story/memoir became a play, and then the film.



## Translator on the Roof

In San Miguel Allende, time stands still but people can change. Nestled in the highlands of central Mexico, this town was built by the Spanish in 1542. Its narrow, cobblestone streets and colonial architecture give it a surreal quality that made me feel as though I had stepped into an alternative reality, a different place and time—as in fact I had. I arrived on a bus from Mexico City and by sundown had rented a place to live and enrolled at the Instituto Allende art school to take classes in ceramics and writing.

I had taken a sabbatical—what is now referred to as a gap year—from a career in advertising that no longer inspired me as it once had. In the throes of a midlife crisis, I was trying to reinvent myself, looking for something else to do, and San Miguel seemed like an ideal place to start.

Blanche—who took a gap year from being a New York theatre director and never went back—had lived in San Miguel for several years. We met through mutual friends in my writing class, and she invited me to join her translation circle. I grew up bilingual in Uruguay and had always been a *de facto* translator, but I'd never done any sort of literary translating. The idea appealed to me, and I accepted her invitation.

Blanche lived in a studio apartment perched on the flat roof of a two-story building a couple of blocks from the centre of town. The circle met on her terrace on Thursday afternoons, surrounded by bougainvillea on a trellis and bright red geraniums in rusted buckets, and, occasionally, a line of laundry drying in the sunshine. We had a clear view of the church spire on the far side of the plaza, silhouetted against a brilliantly blue sky. It was the 1970s and we smoked and drank strong coffee and life was full of possibilities.

There were about ten of us in the group, all working from Spanish into English. Two or three had taken courses in translation studies at American colleges, and there were occasional discussions about theory and technique.

But mostly we were newcomers to the field, feeling our way and learning from our own efforts as we struggled to do what proved infinitely harder than we had imagined it would be. We worked on poems and prose passages by Latin American writers we had enjoyed. We agreed that we would also work on texts drawn from popular culture and everyday life, believing that it was important to attune our ears to the vernacular of the street and hone our ability to capture the syntax of the common man. So we translated newspaper articles and posters, handbills and graffiti. I found the process to be utterly enthralling; it was challenging and satisfying in the manner of a good crossword puzzle, but on a far more exacting and intricate scale.

It was sometimes hard to pull away from the circle and we stayed on into the evening, switching from coffee to wine, and talking for hours on the terrace under the stars. Our free-roaming conversations inevitably led to ever-deeper reflections on the origin of language and the nature of speech. How did language originate, and why? We theorized that humans have language because the senses that evolved for our survival led to experiences that required expression. So, at what point was a guttural grunt just not good enough, prompting one of our ancestors to articulate a sound that was inextricably linked to a specific meaning? Questions begat answers that begat more questions in the comfortable company of colleagues who had become friends and fellow travellers on the road to new understanding.

Blanche—who said, “To begin anything with a certainty is to embark on a very short, uninteresting journey”—was never in a hurry for those soirees to end. Neither was anyone else. And there, on her terrace, I found new purpose as I took my first steps towards becoming a translator.



## Wenglish (Welsh + English)

**W**english is a variety of English spoken in the Valleys of South Wales – it is generally understood as referring to the dialects of English spoken in a geographical area extending from the Gwendraeth Valleys of Carmarthenshire in the west through to the Eastern Valley of Monmouthshire in the east. It is the result of the contact between Welsh and English. The name of the dialect is pretty new, it came to use after John Edwards published his “Talk Tidy” books in the 1980s. However, the variety itself dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when workers from all over the country went to South Wales seeking employment in the coal-mining industry. In this period Welsh was the prevailing language, but by the second half of the century English became the main medium of communication in South Wales Valleys. In the 20th century, English attained leading positions replacing Welsh in terms of prestige.

Linguists note that the most salient phonological quality attributed to the Welsh influence on Wenglish is its ‘singsong’ intonation, with the tone usually rising at the beginning and then falling at the end of a sentence. If a long vowel exists in a stressed syllable, such ‘singsong’ Celtic influence will support its length. When it comes to consonants Wenglish doesn’t differ much from Standard English. In Wenglish /r/ is not pronounced before a consonant and at the end of words, and the word-initial /h/ is usually dropped. The inventory of vowels in Wenglish reaches 24. Seven short, 8 long and 9 diphthongs. Linguists attribute this preference to the Celtic syllable break. Since Welsh is characterised by pure vowel sounds and the diphthongs consist of two such sounds with no liaison, many speakers create a syllable break between the vowel sounds, pronouncing for example ‘beer’ ‘bee- uh’

Needless to say, some grammatical peculiarities of this variety are related to the influence of not only English but the Welsh language as well. Therefore, some of its characteristics are analogous to those found in Welsh. For instance:

- *They didn’t go nowhere* (double or even multiple negation)

- *hisself, isself and theirselves* instead of himself, itself and themselves respectively: *He saw it for hissself* (the use of different forms of reflexive pronouns)
- *She caughted it; He has broke it* (non-standard verb forms)
- *It was long-long ago* (the use of reduplication for emphasis)
- *She do run* (the use of the analytical construction with the verb ‘to do’)
- *Mary and John is going to see us tonight* (the use of the third person singular verb with a plural noun subject)

The Welsh presence in Wenglish’s lexicon is restricted. Not many words of Welsh origin have survived. Unsurprisingly, words drawn from Welsh generally relate to culture and behaviour. These are some examples: *carreg* (a stone), *clennig* (a gift of money), *glaster* (a drink of milk and water), *iechyd da* (‘yachy da’) good health (a salutation or toast, from *iechyd* (health), *da* good); *hiraeth* (a profound, consuming longing for a place or person), *hwyl* (a sense of enthusiasm); terms of affection like *bach* and *del* (dear, honey).

On a last note, I would like to make it clear that there is no single, unified form of Wenglish: the accent in Blaenavon, for instance, differs from that of Maesteg or the Rhondda. Accent and vocabulary vary from locality to locality, but there is still considerable common ground between the speakers of Wenglish. Just like Rioplatense Spanish spoken in Montevideo is not identical to that of Buenos Aires, but both speech communities still share most of their linguistic idiosyncrasies.

Even though the development of Wenglish has a two-century history until recently it had not been recognized as a valid dialect form of English. This variety –just like all language dialects– is the result of conflicts and mutual influences of languages. Both English and Welsh shape(d) the sociolinguistic character of Wales. For many Welsh people, Wenglish is used as a vehicle for cultural continuity: the means to an Anglo-Welsh identity.

Intrigued by how Wenglish sounds to your ears? Watch the movie “Twin Town”, set in Swansea, a city in south/west Wales.



## Slightly Awkward Olympic Games

**T**hey were not planned to take place this year, they were supposed to attract thousands of tourists, they were expected to run smoothly and uneventful.

Instead, these will be remembered as really awkward Olympic Games. They were inaugurated a year later, due to the Covid-19 pandemics. All competitions are surrounded by restrictive measures and reduced presence of spectators so as to avoid the spreading of the disease.

Japan had no other alternative than to go on with the games for they could not be postponed any longer. But the sanitary restrictions reduced dramatically the arrival of expected tourists in normal circumstances. For events like the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup, the massive presence of tourists is what helps cover the large investments made in building state of the art sporting centres and lodgings. The lack of tourists, therefore, becomes a serious setback.

It was not the only one, though. Once the Games started different notable episodes started happening.

Simone Biles, the four-time American Olympic gold medallist, announced that she was withdrawing from all gymnastic competitions because of a mental health issue.

Biles had become a real star thanks to her performances in previous Olympic Games. Having already competed in a couple of instances, she told her coach and her team doctor that she was not in the right "head space" to continue. "I'm still struggling with some things," Biles said, "It just sucks when you are fighting with your own head".

Her withdrawal was a strong call to attention on the often-unbearable stress some of these athlete have to deal with, even in people like Simone Biles that has long experience in competing.

Another incident that goes against everything that the Olympic Games stand for, is the one referred to two judokas from Muslim countries (Sudan and Algeria) that refused to compete against an Israeli rival for political reasons: the Palestinian issue.

Since the beginning of times, when the Ancient Greeks

had their own Olympic Games, the idea was that when the games were held a truce should be respected and all conflicts, be they political, religious, or social, set aside. The modern games, inaugurated in Athens in 1896 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, were supported on similar principles called the three values of Olympism: excellence, friendship, and respect in order to promote sport, culture and education and so help build a better world. Such peaceful ideals have nothing to do with pulling out of a contest because some athletes may not like the nationality of his or her rival. Decisions like that go against the Olympic spirit.

Both judokas and also their trainers had their accreditations withdrawn and were sent home.

Russia is not taking part of the games. There is no official Russian delegation in Japan, the national anthem is not played nor is the Russian flag hoisted. Yet they are there, and we can see them in our TV sets. How can both things happen at the same time?

In 2017, Russia was suspended from competing at the Olympic Games because of a state-sponsored doping scandal.

Doping is a worldwide problem, but usually steroids and other drugs are supplied to athletes, or their trainers, when they individually require them. The difference with Russia is that the supply is part of a state policy. Therefore in 2019, Russia was banned from all major sporting events for four years, including the Olympic Games. After some appeals, Russia was allowed to take part under a neutral flag and designation. And that is exactly what is happening.

These middles of the road solutions are somewhat absurd. Or there is a sanction applied to its very end, or it is fully withdrawn. But having a delegation that is Russian in all aspects except for the use of the national flag and anthem is certainly weird.

The Olympic Games have a couple of weeks to go. Hopefully these will be the only strange newsworthy events. What people really want is to sit down and enjoy the remarkable performances talented athletes have to offer.



## The British Wars

### The British Pen Wars

Britons were at war continuously during the XIX and first half of the XX Centuries. Napoleonic and colonial wars in every continent during the first one hundred years and the two world wars of the last century; but we are not referring to these foreign conflicts. Britons were at war between themselves in Montevideo during Britain's Informal Empire, and beyond.

Petty jealousies, different backgrounds, economic competition, working quarrels and myriad other reasons that could have been forgotten or tolerated in normal circumstances were enough to start a conflict in the colonies, with the inevitable consequence in a close knitted community, that everyone would rally behind their friends, acquaintances, or associates, taking a side, and turning a personal animosity into affairs and conflicts of the general colony.

The British community in Montevideo was no exception. There was a strong political, spiritual, and economic leadership that set the tone and order of the community, the establishment, which everyone was supposed to obey and follow. Those who opposed or had conflicting ideas were regarded with suspicion and generated reactions that varied in gravity and response.

Let us revisit some of these "British pen wars" of Montevideo, objectively setting the stage without committing opinion nor giving judgement. There were no "sword wars", nor blood spilling, but some very sharpened pencils were brandished.

### The River Plate Times War.

It is 1888, apogee of the British economic domination, and of the speculative Uruguay. The old colonial ascetism is forgotten and investment in the stock market and proprieties is rampant. A newspaper is needed to channel the money which is printed by the British local banks. Edward Casey, the real estate Moghul of the River Plate founds The River Plate Times and puts William Denstone, a Buenos Aires acquaintance, a self-made man who raised from obscurity to be the secretary of an elite British society in Argentina as editor. A Sunday edition of the daily is put in charge of Henry Castle-Ayre, a university graduate who runs a secondary school for British boys in Montevideo.

The Baring Crisis of 1890 will end the flourishing Uruguayan economy, the newspaper and many British savings which perish together with the English and the

National Banks. Denstone will retain the daily after some month's long struggle with Castle-Ayre. Due to legal actions, he will have to change the name of the newspaper to The Montevideo Times; while Castle-Ayre will end up publishing The Uruguay Weekly News, and they will remain antagonists forever, venting their animosity on the pages of their respective papers.

### The Sun Wars.

It is 1933 and Hitler is heating up Europe and George Mayer from his daily, The Sun is confronting the establishment. Since 1925 when Denstone died, and Mayer tried to take over The Montevideo Times from Denstone's widow, he is not welcome by the community leaders. A syndicate of important British businessmen has been managing and running the newspaper, but its end is obviously near as Denstone was the driving force behind it. In September, the British Schools publish a news release in the Montevideo Times communicating that an accident happened in the school premises which resulted in a pupil with light abrasions over his eye. He was taken to hospital immediately with no further consequences. The Sun a few days later publishes a letter from the pupil's mother where she states that it was a devious attack on the playground, his eye was compromised, and he was taken too late to hospital. The "eye troubles" will be the topic of confrontation for months to come.

The division between Mayer and the establishment enlarges in the coming years. The final rupture point will come in 1943, with war in Europe and the British community in Montevideo divided. Again, the catalyst is the British School, whose authorities, with Hugh Grindley as Chairman and undoubtedly the head and symbol of the establishment, expels six students who are allegedly sons or daughters of enemy aliens. Mayer's immediate response is that the children are not enemies but come from allied Eastern European families and even some of them are Uruguayan born and hence broadens the discussion to the Uruguayan Parliament. Secondly, argues The Sun enclosing a veiled accusation, the only thing the children have in common is that they are all Jews. The "school scandal" will go on for more than a year.

In the 1943 Annual General Meeting of the British Society, Mayer will be declared "*persona non grata*" and ostracised from the community institutions and activities.



## Troubled Times

**I**n notice nowadays many signs that are worrying about modern society, besides the absence of rational, reasonable, and peaceful debate, where all voices are heard. For instance, the crowds screaming slogans while they bring down monuments of civil war heroes in the southern US or the statues of slave traders and colonialists in Britain.

Those people intimidate public officials, and sometimes even the police, and also deface and vandalize everything in their path, with the excuse of exercising their so-called freedom of assembly and speech.

Rather than bringing down those monuments, they should be kept where they are, as reminders of things that were wrong. I say everywhere, but nobody replied yet perhaps because they are not interested in positive solutions but only care about destroying what they don't like, just build more statues of civil rights campaigners or of people who fought slavery, since erasing history, as they try to do, is a way to encourage ignorance.

For instance, for people in the southern US, statues of people like Robert E. Lee or Stonewall Jackson didn't and don't represent slavery but rather a conflict in which state rights were at the centre of the debate at the time. The slavery issue came later on in the war, so that European powers would find it difficult to support and recognize the confederacy.

By bringing down such monuments, we suppress public manifestations of things that were often wrong, something we should always be aware of. It seems that the policy by those extremists that proclaim to be against racism, white supremacy, inequality, etc., is to suppress the freedom of speech we value so much in the west, at a time in which

academics are afraid to speak under threat of losing their jobs, so they can't contribute to any debates with fresh insights, that if they differ from the slogans chanted by such crowds, are wrongly labelled as racist, colonialist or fascist ideas.

Many academics who tried to speak in public to their students and others, were silenced by groups of people opposed to their opinions, who chanted insulting remarks in the sense that if you didn't agree with certain popular notions, you had no right to be heard.

Most therefore avoid such loud confrontations that serve no purpose but observe in the classroom with great trepidation that many of their students adopt similar simplistic attitudes to their academic studies, which poses a serious threat to their future as professionals.

What to do then, challenge those students in order to amplify their perspectives but at the same time, risk tenure as word spreads around? A very difficult choice and others wisely(?) go along with the other, not less serious risk, of avoiding making waves and not fulfilling their duty as professors.

I remember the case of a professor at the University of Toronto who told a graduate student that an extreme interpretation of a certain historical subject, that is rejected by the scholarly consensus, was correct, perhaps to avoid being labelled a racist. This attitude did the student involved no favour and contributed to spread nonsense, since he then quoted this professor as a source.

We are moving in very dangerous directions that will not benefit anybody in the long run and I find it very difficult to see how we can reverse this trend.



## Brandy Snaps

Brandy snaps are a popular desert food in the UK. They are usually moulded into cigar shapes about 10 cm long and 1,5 cm diameter and filled with whipped cream.

Dating back to the Middle Ages, the origin of the name is somewhat obscure, but it probably derives from "branded" as in burned or hot from the supposed presence of brandy.

### Ingredients

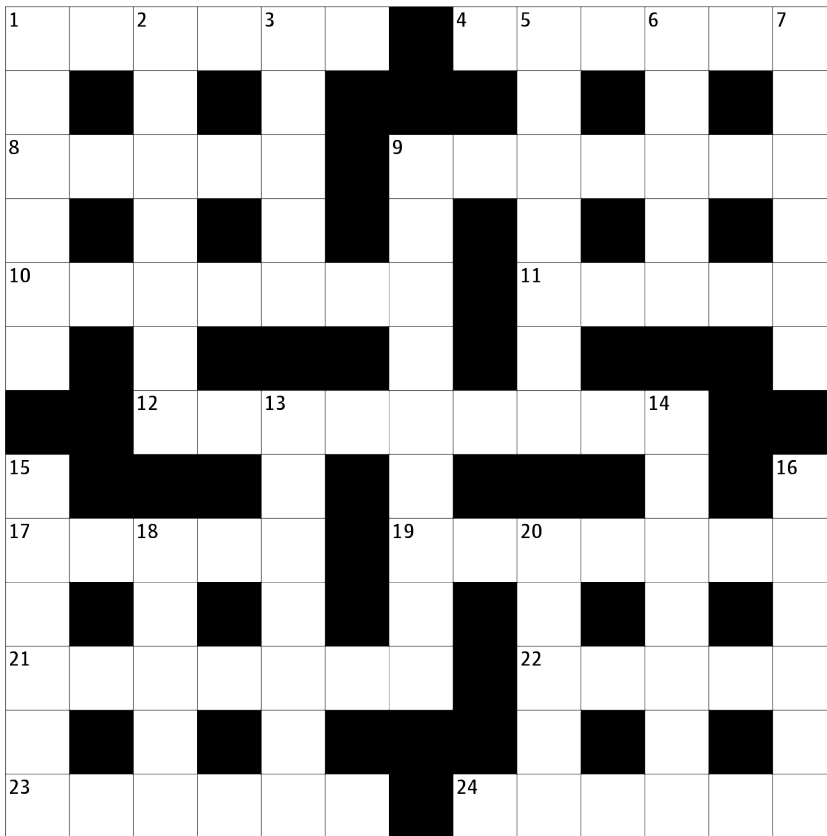
- 50 g butter
- 50 g brown sugar
- 50 g Golden Syrup \*
- 50 g flour
- 1 level teaspoon ginger powder



*\*Golden Syrup is a thick amber coloured form of inverted sugar used widely in the UK for baking and deserts. It can be found imported in major supermarkets in Uruguay. It may be replaced by honey.*

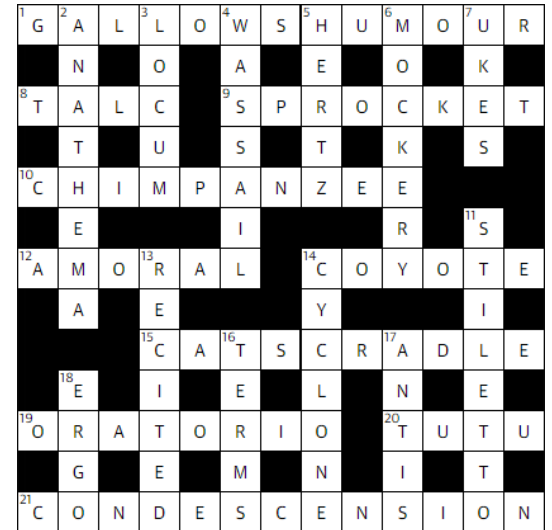
### Method

1. Cream the butter and sugar together and add the Golden Syrup. Add the sieved flour and ginger powder and mix in well.
2. Place four heaped teaspoonfuls of mixture at a time, evenly spaced out on a baking sheet. If required, cover with greaseproof paper to prevent sticking.
3. Bake for 8-10 minutes in a preheated oven set at 180°C until golden brown and lacey in appearance. Remove tray from oven and allow the brandy snaps to cool for one minute. Lift carefully while still flexible and mould into a cigar shape around the oiled handle of a wooden spoon. If they are too hot, they will be unmanageable and they will stretch and break; if they are cold, they will be brittle. Once cool and crisp, remove from spoon and store in an airtight container until required.
4. Fill with whipped cream and serve within one hour to prevent the brandy snap from becoming soft and humid with the cream.
5. They may also be dipped in melted chocolate and rolled in chopped nuts or almonds before being filled with cream.
6. In order to make a brandy snap basket, place one heaped tablespoonful of mixture on a baking tray, cook and shape over an upturned cup or small bowl. Fill basket with ice cream or chocolate or fruit mousse and decorate with fresh fruit.



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

July solution:



## Across

- 1 Soldiers' defensive ditch (6)
- 4 Outer part of a loaf of bread (6)
- 8 Light between red and green (5)
- 9 Give the wrong impression (7)
- 10 Dark-red sour cherry (7)
- 11 Atlas or Prometheus, for instance (5)
- 12 Go too far (9)
- 17 Begin to do something energetically (3,2)
- 19 Sharp front tooth (7)
- 21 Ear (informal) (7)
- 22 Short — essential information (5)
- 23 One suffering for their beliefs (6)
- 24 Dazed and confused (6)

## Down

- 1 Emotional shock with lasting effects (6)
- 2 Agreement not to publish material before a certain time or date (7)
- 3 Yuletide song (5)
- 5 Italian rice dish cooked gradually in stock (7)
- 6 Used time (in a specific way) (5)
- 7 Section of rail track used for shunting (6)
- 9 Homes in on (anag) — illicit alcohol (9)
- 13 The environment as it relates to living things (7)
- 14 Posing a challenge (7)
- 15 Place of safety (6)
- 16 Artful (6)
- 18 The --- Who Came to Tea, 1968 children's book by Judith Kerr (5)
- 20 Highland Games equipment (5)

## THANK YOU NOTE

Dear members of the British Society,

I wish to thank you kindly for my birthday card.  
I appreciate it very much!

Best regards,  
Sylvia Vignole







## Lammas Day

**1**st August is Lammas Day and is Thanksgiving time (Harvest time) in Britain. The name comes from an Anglo-Saxon word Hlafmaesse which means Loaf Mass. The festival of Lammas marks the beginning of the harvest when people go to church to give thanks for the first corn to be cut. This celebration predates our Christian harvest festival.

On Lammas Day farmers made loaves of bread from the new wheat crop and gave them to their local church. They were then used as the Communion bread during a special mass thanking God for the harvest. The custom ended when Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church, and nowadays we have harvest festivals at the end of the season. Michaelmas Day (September 29) is traditionally the last day of the harvest season.

Lammas Day used to be a time for foretelling marriages and trying out partners. Two young people would agree to a "trial marriage" lasting the period of the fair (usually 11 days) to see whether they were really suited for wedlock. At the end of the fair, if they didn't get on, the couple could part.

Lammas was also the time for farmers to give their farm workers a present of a pair of gloves. In Exeter, a large white glove was put on the end of a long pole which was decorated with flowers and held on high to let people know that the merriment of Lammas Fair was beginning.

### Lammas Day Superstition

To bring good luck, farmers would let the first corn bread go stale and then crumble it over the corners of their barns.





# THE BBC REEL GUIDE TO HAPPINESS

## The key to a more satisfying and happy life

Where we live and the cultural expectations put upon us can contribute to our happiness levels. Tolerance, freedom and letting go of some of the 'social rules' expected of us can make us happier, and when we are happy we have more energy to do good things for others.

**BBC**  
REEL



## FILMS TO WATCH IN AUGUST



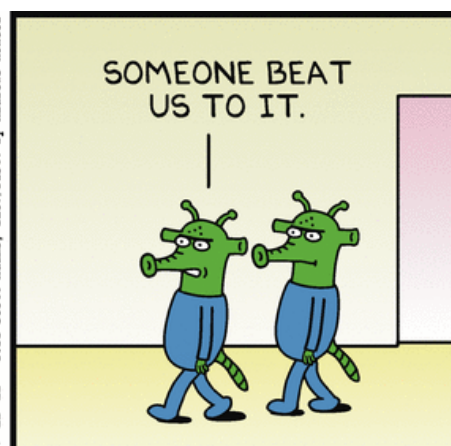
From Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Vivo* to supernatural slasher *Candyman* and Aretha Franklin biopic *Respect*, these are the films not to miss this month.

**CLICK HERE TO SEE  
THE LIST OF FILMS**



## DILBERT

by Scott Adams  
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*Yorkshire*