THE BRITISH SOCIETY IN URUGUAY
FOUNDED 1918

Contact

August 2020

The British Society in Uruguay
English Chat Time
Medical Column
Zoom
Chef Phillip's Corner
French Onion Soup

www.britsoc.org.uy

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PRESIDENT'S WORDS

Dear members,

July saw the third BSU Online Forum, which featured Alejandro Stanham, who enlightened us on the Power of Others in our lives, and what we can do to try to have relationships that empower us and those around us. The talk followed up on Alejandro's 2019 after-office talk on Meaningful Results, when he reflected on the personality aspects that are decisive to obtain positive results and have significant relationships, and is the second talk of a set of three Which we hope to complete in the not-too-distant future. The BSU Online Forum cycle will continue in August, this time featuring Richard Cowley talking about his adventures being caught abroad on a cruise ship as the coronavirus pandemic broke.

This month we will continue with the online English Chat Time, whose objective is to get participants to practice their conversation skills in English, and is aimed mainly at our Uruguayan anglophile members who need to perfect their English language skills and at non-members who may take an interest in the Society. The Chat Time kicked off last month and already has a small group of faithful attendees, which will surely grow over time. Conversations cover a great variety of topics to develop vocabulary as well as grammar and are tailored according to participants' needs and suggestions. Spaces are limited, since we aim to keep numbers restricted to allow all attendees to participate in the chat, so book your place with time if you want to take part.

At the end of July we were sad to say goodbye to Ambassador Ian Duddy and his partner Neil Morrison. Ian and Neil were frequent attendees at Society events and were kind enough to host a number of them in their own Residence (including the memorable Centenary Party in 2018). In particular, Ian and Neil often either visited or hosted the residents of the Society's Sir Winston Churchill Home, for which we are very thankful. Ian was also often seen at events of most of our British Society Council institutions, in many of which he acted as Honorary President. Beyond the British community, Ian was very active in Uruguayan civil society and was a recognisable face to many locals with no affinity to the diplomatic corps. He was hugely popular on social media with a substantial fan base, especially on Twitter and Instagram. In fact, by the time he left Uruguay, Ian had become by far the most recognisable diplomat in the country, easily surpassing his colleagues from larger embassies and/or with larger local communities (such as the United States, Spain, Italy and France). So I am positive he will be missed both by the British community and Uruguayans in general. We wish him well for his short term as British Ambassador to Chile, and hope he and Neil will visit Uruguay again sometime.

We welcome his successor, Ms Faye O'Connor OBE, who will be arriving in Uruguay this month – from what we have been told – in the company of her husband and two children. We hope she and her family enjoy this country as much as we know their predecessors have, and we look forward to seeing them at Society events, the pandemic permitting.

For the moment Society events remain virtual, though we still hope to be able to have our outdoor events once the weather improves and the pandemic is again under control.

In the meantime, stay safe. Hopefully, we will be seeing each other again before long.

Richard A. Empson MBE
President

MEMBER NEWS

New Members

Anita Marie Olsem
Diego Luis Payssé Salgado
Guillermina Vivo Durán
María Mercedes Linn
Patricia 'Patty' Carabelli Mari

Birthdays in August

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

"Wishing all of you a day filled with happiness and a year filled with joy"
Happy Birthdays!

THIS MONTH'S COVER

London Zoo is the world's oldest scientific zoo. It was opened in London on 27 April 1828, and was originally intended to be used as a collection for scientific study.

The ZSL London Zoo Lodges is situated in extraordinary surroundings inside the Land of the Lions exhibit, where guests will bed down for the night within roaring distance of the Asiatic lions.

Set in the heart of London Zoo and the greenery of surrounding Regent's Park, you may enjoy a night's escape from the bustle of London without even leaving the city! Expect to feel like you are very far away as you wake to the sounds of roaring lions, singing gibbons, honking flamingos, and the neighbouring native wildlife.

Stay safe,

Geoffrey W Deakin

Editor.

Our cover:
A lion in the
ZSL London Zoo Lodges

Sleepover at London Zoo
inside Gir Lion Lodge

BSU MEMBERSHIP FEES

Notice to Society Members

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.

Another way to pay the fee online is using Mercado Pagos 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.

Once this is done, your membership will be updated.

ENGLISH CHAT TIME

Online English Chat Time

Thursday 13th August
At 18:30 hrs
Google Meet

Practise and improve your **English** skills.
Use a great **variety of topics**.
Develop your **vocabulary**
as well as **grammar**.
Hosted by **Native Speakers**.

www.britsoc.org.uy
Limited number of participants!

THANK YOU...

ONLINE FORUM 23RD JULY

THE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL HOME

Happy 99th birthday to dear Vivi!!!

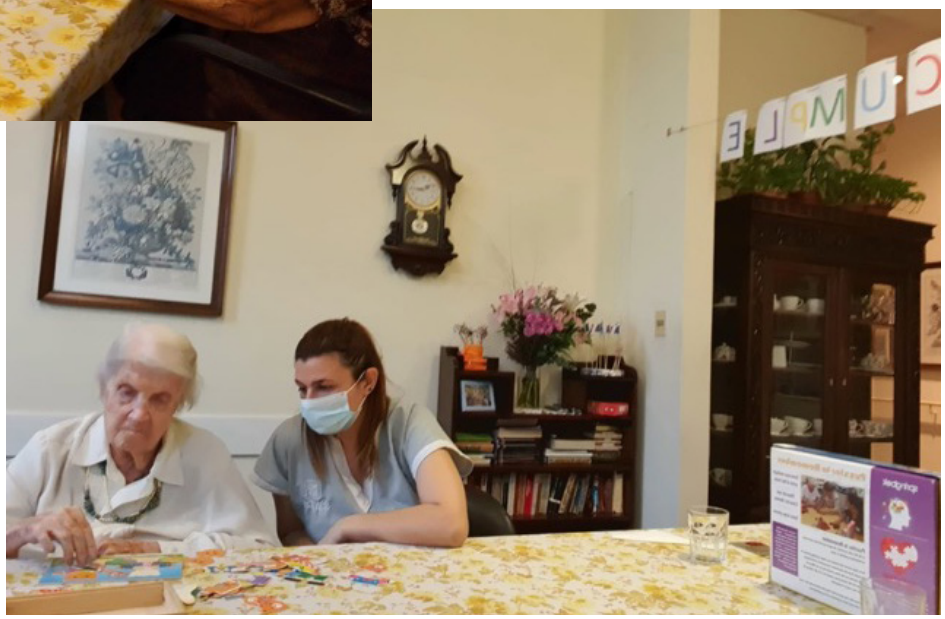
A lovely tea party was organised by our carers with her friends from the Home and two of her daughters.

THE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL HOME

Continued...

The 14th of July Bastille Day was celebrated with lots of information, decorations and croissants, of course!

Playing Bingo and working on jigsaw puzzles, entertaing our residents.



BRITISH EMBASSY

Farewell

Ambassador Ian Duddy left Uruguay last week, after an eventful 4-year period representing the UK in the country. The Embassy published a farewell video on social media highlighting the impact that his work had on all walks of the Uruguayan society. You can watch it on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Ian and Neil were very grateful for all the warm messages received from the public, friends, contacts and various organisations and institutions.

Honour

Congratulations to Martin Wells, President of the British Hospital, on being awarded The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, MBE. Ambassador Ian Duddy had the pleasure to hand out this honour, sent by Her Majesty the Queen, for his services to the British Community in Uruguay.

Embajada Británica
Montevideo

New Ambassador

Our new Ambassador, Faye O'Connor OBE, will take up her role in mid-August, and will be joined in Uruguay by her husband, Angel, and their two children Emily and Oliver. Ambassador O'Connor has spent the few months in London polishing her Spanish, having previously finished her 4-year position as Head of International Development at the UK Permanent Representation to the United Nations in New York. Prior to that, Ambassador O'Connor spent 6 years in Mexico, working on climate and prosperity, and also has extensive experience working in London on topics including Energy and Climate Change and Counter-Terrorism.

BRITISH HOSPITAL

Latest News
on technology, specialties and doctors of the BH Scheme

BH SCHEME SPECIALTIES AND DOCTORS
New healthcare professionals have joined the service which for years has been led by Dr Roberto Superchi. The new team members and subspecialties have extensive professional development and are leaders in the field.

Department of Cardiology
• **Dr Alvaro Baez**: coordinator of the imaging and stress tests service, has been internationally certified (NBE) for the performance of ultrasound tests as have all his team members. Thus, this is the first cardiology service in Uruguay to have all its doctors internationally certified to perform these tests.
• **Dr Gonzalo Varela**: coordinator and specialist in electrophysiology and arrhythmia management.
• **Dr Bernardo Layerle**: outstanding healthcare professional on our list of doctors, joins us in the new role of coordinator of the clinical area of this Department.
• **Dr Gustavo Tortajada**: joins as clinical physician on the team led by Dr B. Layerle.

Endocrinology Service
This is a specialty which has seen great progress in the areas of obesity, thyroid pathology, and diabetes. This service incorporates diabetology.
Two healthcare professionals with outstanding track records have joined the existing team, they are:
• **Associate Professor Dr Cristina Alonso**
• **Dr Gabriela Sosa**

Gynaecology and Obstetrics Service
This specialty continues to incorporate outstanding healthcare professionals to cover the whole spectrum within it and thereby provide the most comprehensive care for our lady members of the BH Scheme.
New healthcare professionals have joined the distinguished staff at this service and have incorporated specialized units:
• **Dr Mariana Piastri**: specialized in adolescent health.
• **Dr Ana Manuela Sosa**: specialized in fertility.
• Gynaecological Cancer Unit led by **Dr Gonzalo Sotero**, **Dr Santiago Scasso** and **Dr Joel Laufer**.
• Lower Genital Tract Polyclinic Unit with **Dr Luciana Bertolino**.

Ophthalmology Service
A new healthcare professional has joined this service:
• **Dr Salomón Saúl**: an excellent academic and specialist in children in all areas.

Mastology Unit
The Mastology Unit was further strengthened during the year by the doctors in this specialty working together under the supervision of an academic coordinator.
A Licenced nurse (nurse navigator) joined the team to track and support all patients from diagnosis to final discharge.

TECHNOLOGY
Significant innovations have been added to our already advanced technology in various sectors.

Operating Theatre
• Video Laryngoscope that allows on-screen viewing of the airways to optimize the performance of endotracheal intubation.
• C-arches for multiple functions, especially for traumatic surgeries, to improve the quality of intraoperative images and optimize decisions during the procedure.
• Laser Holmium for the treatment of renal lithiasis when required in addition to prostate pathologies.
• Transrectal Biopsy Transducer will shortly be available and will allow for the diagnosis of prostate pathologies (benign or malignant).

Cardiology
Latest generation echocardiograms that provide excellent image quality.

Imaging
Latest generation mammography machine allows for biopsy samples to be made and enabling quick diagnosis which saves time in the case of malignant pathologies.

ACADEMIC TRAINING
We continue with the academic training activities through Zoom, as well as the daily athenaeums for the discussion of patients.

ANGLO-URUGUAYAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE

NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

ANGLO

It is a well-known saying which reflects the fact that inventions or new ways of doing things often arise from a short-need to find alternatives. Furthermore the new process generally continues in use way beyond the short-term need to find an alternative because it is more efficient or effective than the previous one. What has this to do with the Anglo Institute?

When the Corona Crisis developed, I decided to stay at my home in Switzerland rather than return to Uruguay. Even if I had managed to return to Uruguay, I would not have been able to present any talks to students or the public because all activities "presenciales" had been suspended by the Institute.

With this in mind, Diego Santi (Anglo Pocitos /Anglo Cultural) contacted me with a view to producing some short video clips which could then be posted on the social media sites of the Institute, such as Facebook and Twitter. To date we have produced 3 series of video clips covering the British influence in different neighborhoods of Montevideo; interesting events in Uruguayan history with a British connection and finally a look at some less well-known British personalities and their impact in Uruguay.

What has been interesting is the number of viewings the short video clips have received - often 500+ across the various social media sites of the Institute. Furthermore this number increased significantly in July when the British Society itself also started including the videos on its social media. The overall level of viewings is much higher than the number of people who would attend a normal talk by myself. This therefore indicates that even when activities "presenciales" at the Institute have fully returned to normal, we should continue to present short extracts of any talks I (or anyone else for that matter) give on social media platforms as well.

So the video clips, which began as a short-term alternative for the Corona crisis, may have a longer-term benefit as well in enabling us to communicate with and entertain a much wider audience than in the past. In addition, in other areas of the Anglo Institute, the recent use of "virtual" classrooms may also have a longer-term impact.

Written by Derek Tyler
Regular Anglo Presenter

BH HOSPITAL BRITANICO
apoya Embajada Británica
963 Alfa FM
VISA
Visión Group

THE ANGLO THEATRE VIP BOX INAUGURATED BY BRITISH AMBASSADOR MR IAN DUDDY

HM Ambassador Ian Duddy and Anglo General Manager Gerardo Valazza share the honours unveiling the plaque

On Monday 13th, July, HM British Ambassador to Uruguay, Mr Ian Duddy, kindly agreed to inaugurate the Millington-Drake Theatre's VIP Box, where he unveiled a new plaque that reads:

The VIP Box

The seats located in this VIP Box are reserved exclusively for Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Uruguay, Representatives of the British and the Uruguayan Government, and members of the Anglo-Uruguayan Cultural Institute Board of Governors.

The unveiling of this plaque took place in the presence of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Uruguay, Mr Ian Duddy, who worked tirelessly to develop the strong bilateral relations between Great Britain and Uruguay.

The plaque was unveiled by Mr Ian Duddy, accompanied by Anglo General Manager, Mr. Gerardo Valazza, and the President of the Anglo Board of Governors, Dr Mark Teuten.

The aim of this brief ceremony was to thank Mr Duddy for his unconditional support to all the Anglo activities and for developing the ties forged by the shared democratic values which have sustained the United Kingdom and Uruguay's relationship for over two centuries.

Once again, We would like to wish him and Neil all the very best and every success in their new destination!

THE ANGLO SCHOOL

BACK TO SCHOOL AT LAST!

Tuesday 16th June was an important day for our Kinder students – their first day back in the school building after around 100 days of distance schooling.

With bright smiles behind their face masks – our younger ones cheerfully came back to school. Parents seemed even happier as this meant a step closer to "back to normal."

With all the Health and Hygiene Protocols in place, we were all eager to start this new phase knowing that what our kids need the most at this moment is to interact with peers and others, aside from their families. As Dr Alvaro Galiana has stated: "Children and adolescents need time away from parents' control,

sharing with their peers and learning to socialize."

Since then, the rest of the students followed suit and currently we have over 700 students attending classes either in the morning or the afternoon. Social distancing means we cannot be altogether so videoconferencing and our online learning platform

have been invaluable tools.

Although learning never stopped, with our teachers and students back in the classrooms, the school building is coming alive again!

Lovely to have everyone back!

THE ANGLO SCHOOL

Continued...

SECONDARY SCHOOL TOWN

It has been a dream of ours for some years and now, despite this challenging year, it is about to come true: The Anglo School Town will soon be offering Secondary Education. In 2021, we will be inaugurating First Year of Secondary and will continue growing from there.

We are proud to be part of an educational network that has existed in Uruguay since 1934 and is present in all departments of our country. The Anglo was born as a Cultural Institute and it grew by leading in the field of teaching and learning English.

Continuous growth is a characteristic of the Anglo: we founded our bilingual school in Carrasco in 2001; four years later we opened our branch in Town offering Kinder and Primary Education. A couple of years ago, we began a series of renovations in Town to modernise the building and last year a new Sports Field was inaugurated.

The opening of Secondary Education at our Town branch marks a milestone in our efforts to offer high quality bilingual education by providing our students with the continuity they have been asking for: strong values, personalized learning and high quality teaching.

If you would like more information, please contact us at theangloschool@anglo.edu.uy

CHRIST CHURCH MONTEVIDEO

Available Online Spaces

If you have questions, ask jhamilton@christchurchmvd.org

Do you know someone who is struggling with feelings of anxiety and uncertainty? How can you help them? Every week in Christ Church online spaces, we pursue goals to help each other help others.

For example, we practice the hospitality of listening! Our Sunday teaching times include twice as much time for interacting as for teaching. No correcting or counselling someone else. Everyone speaks in first person. (for example, “I feel…, I think…, I wonder…). The goal is to listen well!

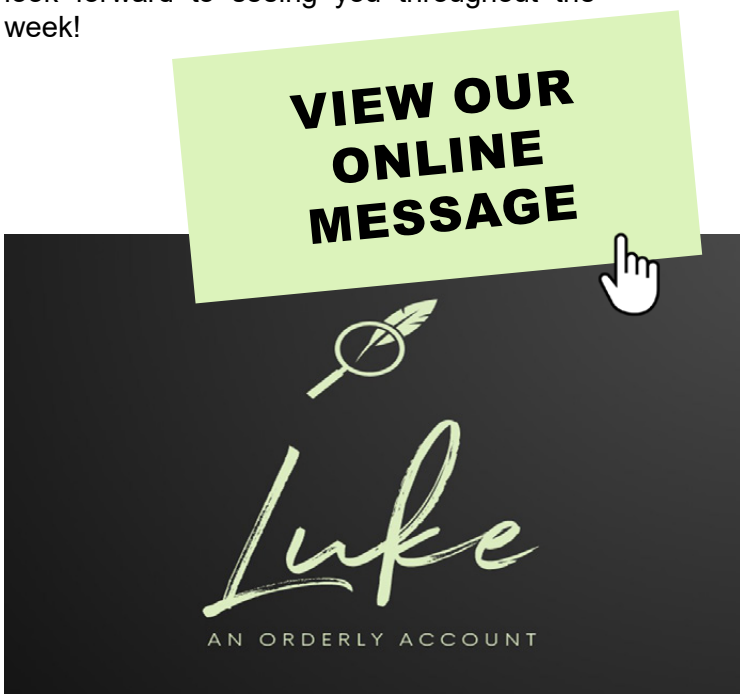
We also practice the humility to give everyone a voice. If listening is important, so is speaking briefly and to the point. We try to provide safe spaces where differences of perspective, opinion and belief are expressed and received respectfully. Humility allows us to be part of a circle of people without having to be in control, in charge, or in the centre. Part of humility is accepting ourselves, even loving ourselves enough to just “be”.

Learning from others is another goal. Christ Church tries to be a learning community. By combining hospitable listening and humbly giving others a voice, we create an opportunity to learn from each interaction, every dialogue, each encounter with another.

If our weekly devotional email encourages you, then help someone else to sign up. If you learned something from one of our messages or chats online (www.christchurchmvd.org), you should share it or tell someone how to find it. Nate´s series on Philippians (chats) is excellent and Lisa´s talk on Heaven (messages) was a favourite for many.

Quarantine continues. The church remains closed for now to large groups, but small groups are starting to cautiously gather while following recommended protocols. The Council has done wonderful work administratively to implement protocols, oversee required maintenance, and aid some families and organizations to insure people in our extended circles have adequate heat, food, blankets, personal interaction, medical attention and pastoral guidance.

We thank you for your support and participation and look forward to seeing you throughout the week!



Arocena 1907
Esq. Lieja, Carrasco
Tel 2601 0300
www.christchurchmvd.org

THE BRITISH CEMETERY

Britannia Hall

On Monday July 20th, HM Ambassador Ian Duddy unveiled the plaque in recognition of the donation made by The British Hospital for the conversion of the British Cemetery's foreman's house into a community hall.

Britannia Hall which can adequately seat 40 participants, plus a panel of 5 or 6 in front, can also be converted into a dining room or have the chairs stacked in a corner and used for other purposes. Next to the hall and adapted for people who have certain disabilities, is the bathroom and beyond this a room which can be used for committee meetings which leads on to an ample refurbished kitchen. The kitchen as also the hall, open onto a 40 square meter patio which has a nice sized parrillero. There is also a small room which will be used as an archive of the different British Community organizations.

Though Britannia Hall will be administered by the British Cemetery, it is for the use of the British Society and its affiliated organizations.

In this way, once again, The British Cemetery Society continues to assist the British Community, this time with the generous help of one of the institutions it originally assisted and which has become a first class hospital and leader in Health Care.

BC CEMENTERIO BRITANICO

BRITISH-URUGUAYAN CLUB

Retired Colonel of the National Army and Master in Political Science from the University of the Republic of Uruguay. In addition, he has a Bachelor of Military Science and a Diploma in Political Science.

As a teacher, he directs the Chair of Strategy and the Prospective course of the Center for Higher National Studies (CALEN) of Uruguay.

He is professor of Strategic Prospective at the University of Business and Social Sciences (UCES) of Argentina.

He serves as Coordinator of the Committee for International Security and Defense of the Uruguayan Council for International Relations (CURI).

He is a permanent member of the Committee on International Security and Defense of the Institute of International Relations (IRI) of the University of La Plata, Argentina.

CLUB URUGUAYO BRITÁNICO SINCE 1916

Since March 2020, he has been the National Director of the National Emergency System of the Presidency of the Republic. (SINAE)

He also serves as Secretary of the National Board of Emergencies and Risk Reduction of Uruguay.

DICKENS INSTITUTE

PRINCESS BEATRICE'S WEDDING TO EDUARDO MOPELLI MOZI

Princess Beatrice's wedding had been planned to take place last May. These nuptials had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Finally, as the situation got no better, Princess Beatrice and Mr.Mopelli decided to have a small private wedding rather than the large royal wedding that was the bride's due.

The private wedding was held on July 17th at the Royal Chapel of All Saints at Royal Lodge in Windsor. Close royal family members were in attendance, including the Queen, Prince Philip, Beatrice's parents, Prince Andrew and Sarah, Duchess of York. A very few other family members were present in accordance to all relevant government guidelines.

Beatrice borrowed a beautiful gown that Queen Elizabeth had worn in 1962. This exquisite vintage dress was designed by Norman Hartnell, Her Majesty's famous designer. The dress is made from Peau De Soi Taffeta and has organza sleeves. The bodice has diamanté adorments and it is absolutely stunning. It was fitted specially for the Princess. Princess Beatrice looked radiant on her wedding day. It was very pleasing to see Prince Phillip and Queen Elizabeth looking so well.

We wish the happy couple all the very best and may their marriage be a long and joyful one!

DICKENS INSTITUTE

Continued...

BACK TO FACE TO FACE TEACHING!

All the Dickens Teachers are overjoyed at having the Dickens students back again, filling the Dickens with their high spirits and laughter. Teaching through Zoom has been a marvelous experience, one that will no doubt help teachers a lot in the future and in some cases will be combining face to face classes and virtual ones, but nothing substitutes a class with a real teacher and students! So after a lot of planning on the part of Patricia, Manuel, the Coordinators, Fabián and others, and working on both regulations for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, slowly, carefully and joyfully, the Dickens has opened its doors to the students and public in general. One can tell by the happy faces of the staff and students that it is great to be back!

The Dickens has now started again offering Examinations from the three Examining Boards we are proud to represent: Cambridge Assessment English, Cambridge Assessment International Education and Trinity College London. All three have been extremely flexible about offering multiple exam dates to suit the difficulties facing the institute due to the very rigid but very necessary regulations set by the Government in order to face the Covid Pandemic. We are very grateful to them for understanding our difficulties in times which are not easy for all of us.

All our hopes are centred that things will go well, the students will go on with their studies and sit for their exams as usual. The Dickens Teachers will be travelling at the end of the scholastic year, to whatever part of the country there are Examination candidates, making it easier for the teachers and students living in the country to have access to National and International Examinations. In this way, and hoping that the pandemic will be kind to Uruguay, 2020 will become an almost normal year for us to remember.

Wishing you all the best and do take care! Dickens Institute.

dickens

Examination Centre for:

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON
Validated Course Provider 1942

Cambridge Assessment English
Authorised Exam Centre

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge Associate

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Tomas Linn
tomas.linn50@gmail.com

The High Court and Britain's Best Traditions

Whether the regime that rules Venezuela is a dictatorship or not, is a dilemma that not only affects Uruguay or other Latinamerican countries. The question has reached the shores of the British Isles and the answer to that dilemma has had worldwide legal and political repercussions.

Though it may seem like that, the answer given is not strictly linked to a very present and circumstancial situation. It is also based in Britain's deep roots, its history and its long process in shaping the precise meaning of the concept of Rule of Law.

As it is well known, The High Court of the United Kingdom ruled last month against Venezuela's dictatorship in a legal battle over access to one billion dollars (820 million pounds) of gold stored in the Bank of England.

The Bank got caught in the middle of two opposite claims for the gold. One was presented by Venezuela's dictator Nicolás Maduro. The other by the opposition leader Juan Guaidó, who was declared acting president by Venezuela's National Assembly, controlled by the opposition.

Officially the United Kingdom has recognised opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's transitional president, which means to stay that for the British government Nicolás Maduro is an illegitimate usurper of power and will certainly continue to be so, even after the next elections which are already being manipulated to be an outright fraud.

In that context, Maduro's government claimed it wanted the gold to fund its fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Guaidó, on the other hand, asked the Bank of England not to give the gold back to Maduro, arguing that it would be used for ilegal and corrupt purposes. Considering Venezuela's devastating economic and political crisis, that gold could be of great help the day democracy returns and the country takes a sound path of recovery.

The Bank of England is one of the largest gold vaults in the world and prides itself of never having had any gold stolen in its history of more than three centuries. Many national banks, therefore, store their reserves there.

Politicians that favour Maduro and his regime, condemned the High Court's decision and reminded the British people of their imperial and colonial past. As any nation with centuries of history, many of its episodes can certainly be considered highly controversial. Therefore, Great Britain is no exception.

But in its very recent ruling on this particular issue, the High Court went back to Britain's best traditions. Those that give priority to the Rule of Law and the respect of Human Rights. Traditions that go back to 1215 when King John Lackland signed the Magna Carta, to 1688 with its Glorious Revolution and the Bill of Rights, to the whole idea of the modern Parliament or, ironically (since it separated the American colonies from the Crown), to the influence of British philosophers such as John Locke, that so much inspired America's founding fathers. And more recently, to Britain's unwavering defense of its own freedom and of world democracy when under the leadership of Winston Churchill, faced all alone the Nazi totalitarian expansion.

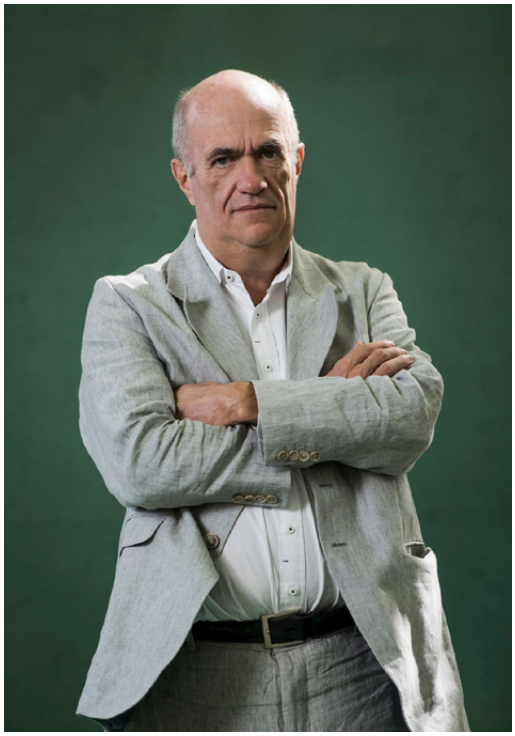
If there is a country that can clearly see the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy, that is the United Kingdom. Its High Court's ruling has kept to its best traditions.

by Lindsey Cordery
lcordery@gmail.com

Colm Tóibín

In an interview once, Colm Toíbín was asked why he thought that Ireland has brought forth so many great authors - James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, George Bernard Shaw, Seamus Heaney among others, despite having fewer than 5 million inhabitants, and his reply was delightfully straightforward: "The only way out of poverty was education. And the only way to education was literacy. So, literacy became a sort of fetish in poor families. Books, reading, and writing." He was born into a small Catholic family in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, the setting for several of his novels.

Brooklyn (2009), hailed as a great historical novel, moves from Enniscorthy to Brooklyn in the 1950's, following a young woman, Eilis Lacey, who decides to emigrate to the U.S. in search of better job prospects and a better life there. She falls in love with Tony, a young Italian plumber- this is a story of immigrants- and not long after must decide whether she wants to live in Ireland or in the U.S. In 2015 the novel was made into an excellent film, beautifully acted by Saoirse Ronan as Eilis, and with Julie Walters as the boarding-house owner; it's currently available on Netflix.



Also set in Enniscorthy, *Nora Webster* (2014) takes place in the late 1960s; Nora Webster's husband, Maurice, has recently died. Like *Brooklyn*, it's narrated from the woman's point of view – but whereas *Brooklyn* follows Eilis to the US and then back to Ireland where she makes her crucial decision about which man she will stay with, *Nora Webster* opens with the drama of her husband Maurice's death. There is no explanation adequate to what has happened – a man dead before his time, his family stricken. This comes to us through Nora's haunted remembering, the story taking place in the aftermath of this devastating blow and deals with how Nora and her relationship with her children survive. One of her routes to survival is through music: the discovery of Schubert and Beethoven, the awkward relationships within the local gramophone society, choosing and buying a stereo, the discovery of Dublin's record shops, the singing lessons taken with the shrewdly eccentric local teacher, slowly open a new world. It's simply, movingly, written.

Also narrated by a woman, Toíbín's 2012 novella *The Testament of Mary*, started out as a play, *Testament*, and after the publication of the book, it developed into a play again, with the same title as the novel. *The Testament of Mary*, Toíbín's novel, might well be thought of as fulfilling the German poet Novalis´s dictum, "Novels arise out of the shortcomings of history", for here we have Mary, the mother of Jesus, being allowed to tell her story which is all but absent from the gospel narratives. In only 81 pages, Mary recalls key events leading to her son´s crucifixion and describes her life of hiding and fear that follow. Toíbín includes an Author's Note at the end, which I quote from:

"As a writer of fiction, it is my job to work through silence, to enter the minds of my characters, to create voices for them, to give them a life that will matter intellectually and emotionally to others. […] Slowly the idea came to me that I could give voice to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the silent woman at the foot of the cross, that I could write a novel in which she would speak. I went to Ephesus and began to imagine her […] as the new dawn of Christianity was emerging in the world, and the story of what happened was being written down".

Mary is visited by two men, one of whom is John, the beloved disciple and author of one of the gospels, her "minders" she calls them- who put pressure on her to remember and tell them what she knows-which she resists, her grief too deep to be putting memories into words. But she does remember -for the reader- episodes in her son´s adult life, such as the resurrection of Lazarus, and its rather frightening aftermath, and the wedding at Cana where she tries to warn Jesus that he is in danger, but he rebuffs her. In her grief, in trying to make sense of her life, she feels the need for comfort from a female deity (foreshadowing the same need which will arise in the Christian tradition) so she goes with one of her neighbours to the Temple- the Temple of the Greek goddess Artemis, later even secretly buying a silver figure of the goddess.

The Testament of Mary is an important and persuasive book: Tóibín's weary Mary, sceptical and grudging, reads as far more true and real than the saintly virgin-figure of tradition. And Tóibín is a wonderful writer: in all his works, his prose is lyrical and moving.

MEDICAL COLUMN

by Dr Jorge C Stanham OBE
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Zoom

If one single word describes or present state, ZOOM would be the best-fitting. It has been used in cartoons and comics as the sound of reaching speeds at high or maximum acceleration. It is also used in photography as the way to view distant objects as close as possible, amplifying details otherwise not visible to the naked eye. It is also a verb: 'zooming in and zooming out' or simply 'zooming' has become the way we are connected in these pandemic months. ZOOM, the company founded by 50-year-old Chinese-born-American Silicon Valley businessman Eric Yuan, has been one of the most profitable organisations in this pivotal year. The other major companies are in catchup-mode: Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Facebook's yet to be launched product, are barely exceptions, mostly used in defined corporate and educational environments. Skype (owned by Microsoft) is now a marginal application. ZOOM is today the default platform for almost everyone. Below the surface of the widely available, very user-friendly and free basic ZOOM product, there are versions for secure healthcare and medical use – at a fee of about USD 100 per month – that are considered legally valid and compliant with personal data privacy regulations. It must be noted that one of the pitfalls of the original ZOOM versions, was that they were not very secure and somewhat porous to unwanted viewers and potential hacking – by programmers working from China for Mr Yuan.

Beyond interpersonal communications and meetings, we are all flooded by offers and requests to attend webinars from the comfort of our desk, sofa or bed. In-person medical conferences are part of our past as are paper documents. Printing material for reading is as environmentally toxic as are plastic single-use bags. We have been zoomed (photographic analogy) to the limited geography of our homes, with a magnified view of the microcosmos of our spaces, people and selves.

But zooming (photographically) into what our uncertain future has in store for us, only provides blurred pictures. If we search for something reflecting our 6-month-ago past, the image only gets blurred even further, making us aware that we are zooming (accelerating) to a future entirely different. In the area of health care, a quantum-shift has already occurred. Overnight, fear of going to healthcare buildings and settings (potential hotspots for transmission of COVID) and the availability of online platforms for creating a substitute for our in-person interactions, has put everyone on both sides of the provider-patient desk on a steep learning curve of how to interact meaningfully and effectively – and it's working! Webinar after webinar of telemedicine try to catch up with the new reality and create a new basis, but reality is going to sweep away the nostalgia for the 'good-old-in-presence-visit'. Virtual consultations are labelled 'complementary' – to the gold-standard of the traditional way of interacting, as a full medical examination will disappear from the scene. But is this so? Over the last decades, the physical exam has been zipped to a token and more reliance is placed on laboratory, imaging and functional tests. Of course, all human interactions depend to an enormous extent on physical proximity at some or most points, but this is not a rigid reality.

Humans have the capacity to learn and adapt to shifting realities and restrictions, as history has shown us. A retired executive secretary friend in her late 60s like myself has picked up learning a new language and chose German (on top of the many she already masters). The pandemic has forced her to do it via ZOOM and 100% virtually, courses, tests and all. She misses the time when learning a language was via interacting with teachers and classmates and is still finding this 'new-normal' disorientating. However,… won't this way of virtual interacting over internet platforms be the rule and that she's really on the learning curve of the only way she'll be relating with others? And… in the event of an in-person meeting, both will be wearing masks and lip-and-gesture reading will be limited to eye-blinking!

Telemedicine is here to stay, thrive and expand. It won't be just 'complementary' and the 'tele' prefix will become irrelevant. Interaction between patients and their professional healthcare providers will be tailored to what is best, necessary and effective. The App on my cell phone where I interact with my doctor does as well (medically) as being present with him. If needed, he can summon me to his office for a physical exam and give me more time than before, without a packed waiting room typical of the assembly-line paradigm of half a year ago. Of course, new issues and problems will arise in this rather unfamiliar environment, but there's no way back – even if someday possible.

We're travelling in interstellar mode: zooming at warp speeds to a new time-space reality.

BACK IN TIME

by Tony Beckwith
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The Great Unknown

"And this was really the way that my whole road experience began,
and the things that were to come are too fantastic not to tell."
On the Road, by Jack Kerouac.

Nothing was ever the same after a friend in a black turtleneck sweater lent me a copy of Jack Kerouac's book. I stayed up all night reading about those wild people who seemed to embody the freedom I yearned for. Free to do anything and go anywhere, whenever they wanted. Free to be themselves, whatever that meant, unrestrained by space or time or convention, driving across the country with the sweet night air blowing in the windows, their minds attuned to a fine madness and music pouring from the radio. By morning I knew I had to leave my home in Montevideo soon and go in search of that excitement. It was 1965, I was already twenty, and precious time was wasting.

The first leg of my journey took me to Buenos Aires, then west across the Argentine pampas and over the Andes to Chile. From there I took the road heading north. The bus left Santiago at dawn and by the time it lurched out of the terminal every seat was taken, with everyone's luggage strapped on top. Two drivers would take turns at the wheel. We'd eat at roadhouses when we stopped for gas three or four times a day, and be on board the rest of the time, mile after mile, day after day, for seven days and nights. It was the cheapest ride I could find.

The road ran north between the coast and the foothills of the towering cordillera, and before long we were in the Atacama Desert. The bus had neither heating nor air conditioning, so we kept the windows open during the day. The desert air blasted through the cabin like a dragon's breath and the metal windowsills were too hot to lean on. We sprawled in our seats, with handkerchiefs covering nose and mouth, drenched in sweat. In the evening, as the sun dipped down into the ocean, the deep blue shadow of the bus stretched out farther and farther across the desert floor until it finally melted into the gathering darkness and disappeared. The temperature dropped like a stone and we all scrambled to close the windows and put on warmer clothes.

Night driving was the best part of the trip. It was sometimes so cold I couldn't sleep, so I'd stand on the bottom step by the door at the front of the bus, leaning over the railing and peering through the windshield. The meager headlights made the night seem darker. To left and right the land was inky black, but above us the sky was magnificent. The great chandelier of stars shimmered brilliantly over the desert and my mind drifted in a distant galaxy. *"Lo desconocido,"* the driver suddenly said, bringing me back to Earth. I turned and looked at the man, his eyes smiling in the soft green glow from the dashboard. "Beyond the headlights," he said, nodding towards them. "Out there, in the darkness, the unknown." I nodded, suddenly glad not to be alone.

On the seventh day we crossed the border into Peru. We drove all day near the coast, and in the late afternoon came to a crossroads a few miles from the town of Nazca. The bus was going on to Lima, but I was hoping to hitch a ride east, to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. After a week of living together on the road it took a little while to say goodbye to all my fellow travelers, but I finally stepped down and stood back and waved. I watched as the bus gradually disappeared into the distance, and then I was utterly alone. I was also without a plan. There were no buildings, no billboards, nothing but the ribbon of roads intersecting in the vast emptiness of the desert as the sun sank in the west. The words 'the unknown' echoed in my mind and I wondered what would happen when darkness came and swallowed me whole. The shadows slowly surrounded me and when the cool night air brushed the back of my neck, I didn't know which way to turn. I thought about the freedom and the new life that lay somewhere far ahead, and weighed it against the memory of home, so comforting yet so far behind. I waited in the gathering dusk, just a tiny dot on the landscape, struggling to keep a precarious hold on my courage, trying not to panic.

And then, miraculously, a rundown old pickup truck came wheezing out of nowhere, heading east. The driver asked where I was going. "Cuzco!" I said, almost weeping with relief when he told me to hop in. The three tired men in the back looked me over with very little curiosity, and we drove on in silence as night fell and the sky filled with stars.

KNITTING CARE

by Maureen Hyland
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A year has gone by since the Knitting Care project was launched by the British Hospital Guild. A knitting project, where anybody and everybody are invited to knit or crochet squares to make up throws or blankets. Towards this end, areas were set up in different areas of the Hospital, with a couple of comfortable chairs, a basket of colourful skeins of wool and knitting needles, as well as a few crochet needles.

The object is, for people who are either waiting or whiling away their time as they look after a loved one, it being family or friend, can entertain themselves and at the same time, are doing something towards a good cause, **by knitting a square**.

The idea is that you pick up the needles and commence a square which you can either finish or leave it there for someone to pick up where you left off, or carry on with it, another day.

Certain instructions should be followed; the squares **MUST measure 20 x 20 cms,** making it easy for those putting the future throws together. Colours do not matter if the wool is not thin.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ALL THIS FOR?

With the knitted squares we receive, we are putting together some beautiful colourful throws, and when a considerable number of throws are ready, we look for a worthy cause through the British Hospital and they subsequently are donated.

In July, some 60 throws, both big and smaller children sizes, were donated to the charities ALDEAS INFANTILES and CAIF in Canelones for families and children in very vulnerable situations. We hope to carry on with this lovely opportunity

I would like to thank all those involved, and who continue knitting squares to this day, as well as the kind souls who help putting the throws together as it is not an easy fete to combine. We are also greatly appreciative of the donations of wool.

The sanitary situation Uruguay is going through now does not permit us to have our corners or areas set up within the Hospital. However, knitting and crocheting is still being carried out at home, and squares continue to pour in and left at the British Hospital Shop.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

CHEF PHILLIP'S CORNER

by Phillip Berzins
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French Onion Soup

During these cold winter days there is nothing warmer and comforting than a French onion soup. When I opened Le Gavroche restaurant on Rivera Street in Montevideo in 1988 it was a dish which featured on the menu every single day for the five years the restaurant was open.
Onion soup is also a mainstay on the menus of brasseries, those great culinary and social institutions of the French capital, Paris.
These Art Nouveau style dining rooms have remained unchanged for well over 100 years. They are places where you can eat well at a reasonable price.
Specialties served in these eateries include oysters and shellfish, onion soup, an Alsacian-influenced dish of pork, sausages and sauerkraut and tarte tatin.
Any visit to Paris must include a visit to a brasserie one of the few places where you can still feel the real Paris. To name but a few: Bofinger, Brasserie Flo, La Coupole, Les Grandes Marchés

To make a good onion soup it is very important to carefully caramelise the onions, to use a good beef stock and to have a quality cheese to gratinate.

Recipe for 4 Portions

- 1 kg onions cut in julienne
- 30 g butter
- 20 ml olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic finely chopped
- 1¼ lt beef stock (a homemade stock is obviously better, but may be replaced with beef stock cubes)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 10 crushed black pepper corns
- ½ a baguette thinly sliced brushed with olive oil and toasted
- 100 g Gruyère-type cheese, grated
- 100 g Parmigian-type cheese, grated

Preparation

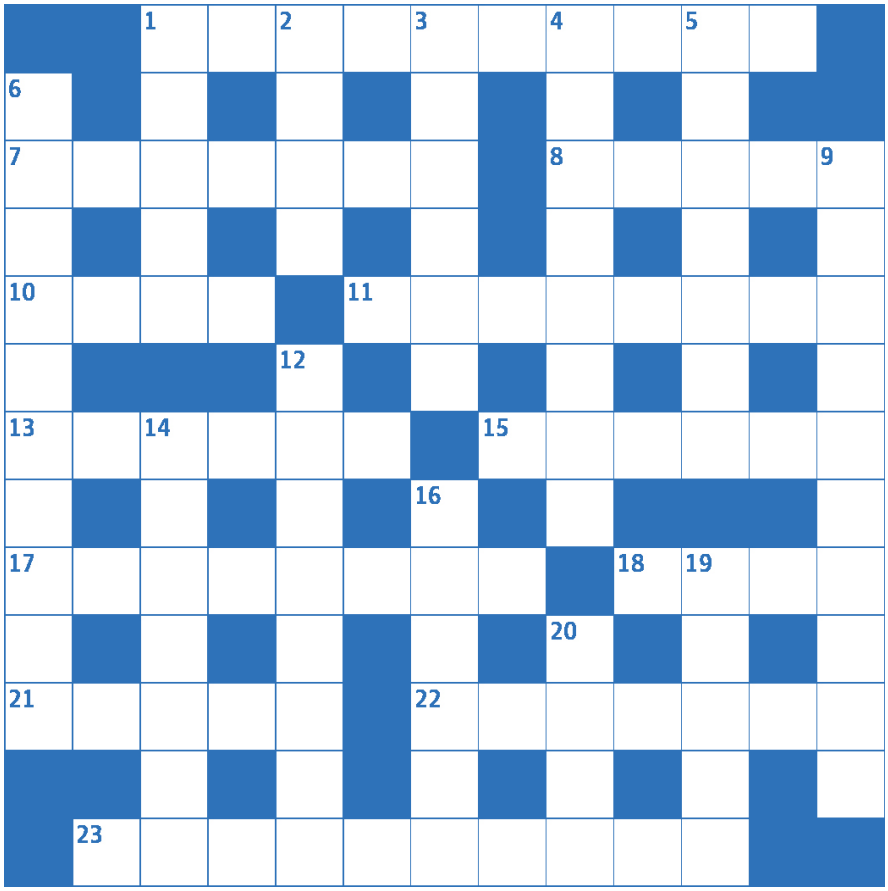
In a thick-bottomed pan fry the sliced onions in the butter and olive oil stirring frequently for between 30-45 minutes until the onions begin to change colour and caramelise in their own juices.
Add the garlic and fry one minute more. Add the beef stock, bay leaf, thyme, pepper and simmer gently for 30 minutes more.
Check seasoning for salt and serve in heat-proof bowls. Cover surface completely with toast, sprinkle with the cheese and gratinate well in a hot oven or under a grill. The toast will absorb the beef stock and become soft, and the cheese will melt, taking on a chewy texture.

Enjoy!

For any queries or questions, please contact me via e-mail at sbpberins@gmail.com.

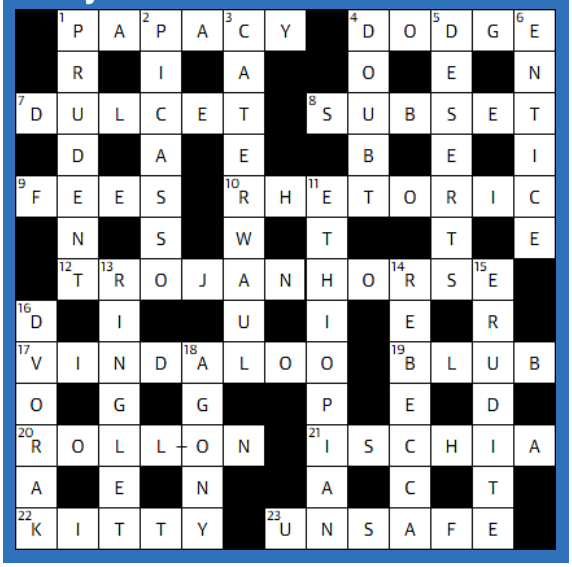
SPEEDY CROSSWORD TIME!

from The Guardian
www.theguardian.com



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

July solution:

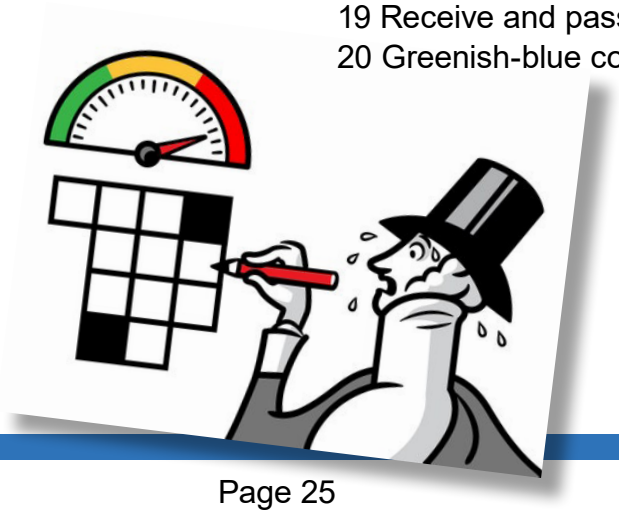


Across

1 Using frugally (10)
7 Dispute over territory between rival gangs (4,3)
8 Spore-producing organisms (5)
10 Dry outer covering of some seeds (4)
11 Highest spot in Britain (3,5)
13 Stay (6)
15 Poetically, a gentle wind (6)
17 Indian city, centre of the Sikh faith (8)
18 Unencumbered (4)
21 Long (5)
22 Perfectly delightful (7)
23 Mickey Mouse creator (4,6)

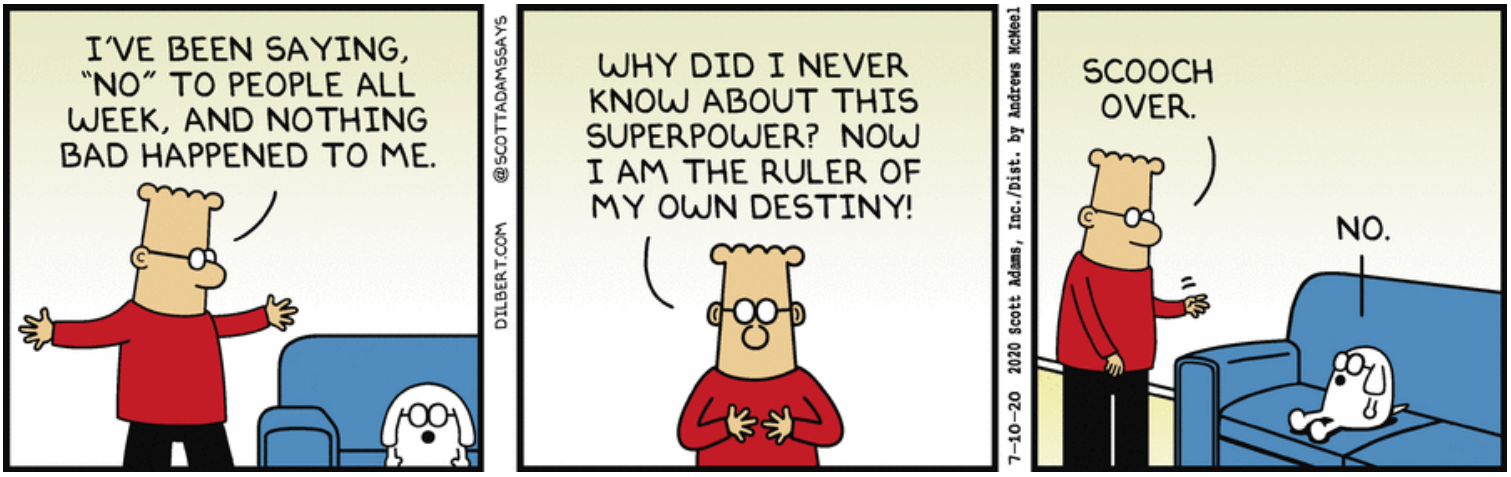
Down

Egyptian god of the sun (5)
2 Stitched (4)
3 Better ventilated (6)
4 Protector (8)
5 Ancient city on the Tigris (7)
6 Prepared for action (2,3,5)
9 Rebellion (10)
12 Well-defined (8)
14 Inland Turkish sea between the Dardanelles and the Bosporus (7)
16 Largest island of French Polynesia (6)
19 Receive and pass on (5)
20 Greenish-blue colour (4)



DILBERT

by Scott Adams



LINK OF THE MONTH

The benefits of being 'ugly'

In an age of airbrushed beauty, can turning against the grain work more to your advantage?

Ugly Models celebrates the raw and real nature of being human in all its unique forms.

On its 50th anniversary, the agency reminisces about the models who have appeared in some of the biggest movie franchises, such as Star Wars, Harry Potter and The Rocky Horror Show.

BBC REEL

Click HERE to visit the Website