



CONTACT

MAY 2024

**British Society
Annual General Meeting**

**The British Schools
Flashdance The Musical**

**Literature Matters
Lord Byron**

**Medical Column
Summer Bugs, Winter
Bugs and Future Bugs**

**Musical Box
A Tragic Royal Rhapsody?**

www.britsoc.org.uy



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Montevideo, Uruguay



Dear Members:

I am delighted to address you for the first time as President of The British Society in Uruguay. Stepping into this role, I am eager to build on the formidable legacy of my predecessors and further fortify the ties that bind our community. We are, in many ways, an extended family, united not only by shared interests but by a rich, collective heritage. It is my sincere hope that we can continue to deepen these connections and together, enhance the vibrancy of our society.

This May, as we celebrate Book Month here in Uruguay, I encourage each of you to share your favourite reads. As an avid reader myself, I am always on the lookout for compelling recommendations. Please send your suggestions to our society's email, and we will compile a list to share in our next newsletter, fostering a great conversation among us.

April was an eventful month for our Society, culminating in our Annual General Meeting at The British Schools Pavilion on April 25th. Despite the inclement weather, we enjoyed robust attendance. I was particularly gratified by the presence and engaging remarks of HRH Ambassador to Uruguay, Ms Faye O'Connor, who offered warm commendations to our community. A heartfelt thank you to all who joined us, whether in person or virtually. Your participation truly enriches our gatherings. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to our community chefs for their delectable contributions, our event organisers, and The British Schools for their hospitality and for providing the venue.

Looking ahead, May and June promise further occasions for camaraderie and connection. Please mark your calendars for the Council Meeting on May 23rd—I look forward to engaging with many of you there. Also, do join us for an intriguing After Office event at Betalba on May 16th, where historian Fernando Lopez D'Alesandro will enlighten us on our historical roots and contemporary challenges, an enlightening exploration for all who cherish our heritage.

June will kick off with an exuberant start as we host a Karaoke night on June 1st. Details will follow, so stay tuned!

In my tenure, I am committed to enhancing member benefits and extending our reach to more British families not yet part of our society. Including more families enhances the diversity and richness of our community. Plans are underway to organise reading sessions at Winston Churchill Home and, hopefully, to revive our beloved Bonfire Night in November. I am open to all your ideas and initiatives—please do not hesitate to reach out with suggestions for our future activities.

As a side note, all members interested in both helping the environment and supporting a good cause, I would like to invite you to collect plastic bottle tops. Once you have collected a bag or a full bottle of them, you can contact me and we'll donate them to [BEA](#) (Bicheros En Acción), who use these donations to fund animal rescue operations. This small gesture is a wonderful way to contribute to environmental sustainability and animal welfare.

Looking forward to our continued collaboration and shared successes.

Warm regards,

Ximena Williamson

Hyde Park in Autumn

Hyde Park is the central jewel of London in autumn. With more than 3,000 trees including beech, chestnut and lime, this 350-acre Royal Park bursts with vibrant reds, fiery oranges, and golden yellows.

It is one of the city's most iconic and expansive green spaces, offering a tranquil escape from the bustling city life. Hyde Park boasts lush greenery, serene lakes, and picturesque gardens, making it a favourite spot for both locals and tourists alike.

Visitors can enjoy leisurely strolls along its winding paths, relax by the Serpentine Lake, or partake in various recreational activities such as boating and cycling.

The park also hosts numerous events and concerts throughout the year, adding to its vibrant atmosphere.

With its rich history, stunning landscapes, and diverse attractions, Hyde Park truly epitomizes the charm and allure of London's outdoor spaces.



MEMBERSHIP FEES

Remember you can pay your 2024 membership fees easily from the comfort of your own home using your credit or debit card through [MercadoPago](#).

We have also implemented recurring payments so you no longer have to remember to pay your fees. You do not need to have a MercadoPago user, by clicking [HERE](#) you can choose to enter your details as "Invitado", you are 3 clicks away of never having to remember to pay again! This recurring payment is very easy to cancel if you wish to do so in the future.

You may also pay by transfer or a direct deposit to the account of The British Society in Uruguay at Banque Heritage (account number 62582-03). Please email your transfer/deposit slip to our Treasurer.

If you forgot to pay any previous annual fees please email our Treasurer at treasurer@britsoc.org.uy to learn about ways to pay past dues.

If you wish to become a member first fill in [this form](#).

Your membership will be updated once this is done.



**MercadoPago
Annual Fee - \$700**



**MercadoPago Recurring
Payments - \$650**



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

I hope you are all well and in good spirits. It is with great pleasure that I write to you today as the newly reinstated Newsletter Editor. I am truly honoured and delighted to be back in this role, and I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for your trust and confidence in selecting me once again.

As I resume my responsibilities, I am committed to maintaining the high standards of entertainment and information that our Newsletter has always provided. It is my sincere hope that each edition continues to captivate and inform you, serving as a valuable resource for all our esteemed readers of our community.

Your feedback and suggestions have always been invaluable in shaping the content and direction of our publication. Therefore, I encourage you to share any ideas or recommendations you may have for enhancing the Newsletter. Your input will play a crucial role in ensuring that we meet the evolving needs and interests of our diverse membership.

Once again, thank you for the privilege of serving as your Newsletter Editor. I look forward to our continued collaboration and to delivering many more engaging editions in the future.

Warm regards,

Geoffrey W Deakin

Editor



THANK YOU!!

With your **plastic bottle tops** you are helping us raise money to change the lives of our **rescued dogs** with food, medical attention and shelter.

every bit of help, helps



The bottle tops are recycled into clothes pegs of many colours!



bea
bicheros en acción

www.bea.uv

Birthdays

in May

- 3 María Cecilia Canosa
- 5 Christina Helen Mullin
Gonzalo Rodríguez
- 6 Ana Belén Jiménez de Arechaga
Brian Louis Newenham
Charles Derek Larbalestier
Virginia May Campbell
- 7 Daniel Fabra
- 8 Mary Hillier
Raquel Loureiro
- 9 Dominique Capurro
Marian Irene Whitaker
- 10 Annette Beare
- 11 Haroldo Roberto Miles
- 12 Sharon Elaine Kitchen
- 19 Daniel Roberto Wilson
George McKay Stewart
- 20 Ana María Meikle
Ana Inés Albanell
Lucía María Prevett
- 21 Guillermina Vivo
Ronald Martin Beare



- 22 Mark Christopher Teuten
Patricia Antelo
- 24 Laura Isabel Paolino
- 25 Patrick Hobbins
- 27 Jonathan Miles
Sonya Ayling
- 28 Federica Mills
- 30 Andrew Hobbins
- 31 Carmen Gomensoro

New Member

Michael John Warren Burnett



The views expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The British Society in Uruguay or any individual associated with the creation or distribution of this newsletter. The editorial team assumes no responsibility for any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in the content of this newsletter.

For news from across the pond visit www.abcc.org.ar



May 2024



11 Saturday

St. Andrew's Society of Uruguay
Annual General Meeting
Britannia Hall, British Cemetery

16 Thursday

British Society
After Office
Casa Betalba

19 Sunday

British Society
Autumn Croquet Competition
Anglo School

23 Thursday

British Society
Council Meeting
Christ Church

23 Thursday

Montevideo Players Society
Panthers of '69
Neil Fairless Centre

24 Saturday

Montevideo Players Society
Panthers of '69
Neil Fairless Centre

26 Sunday

Montevideo Players Society
Towel Day
Neil Fairless Centre

30 Thursday

Montevideo Players Society
Panthers of '69
Neil Fairless Centre

List your events in our calendar:

We invite all sister societies to send us dates of your upcoming events to editor@britsoc.org.uy.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Photobomb by Faye!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday, 25th April at The British Schools Pavilion. Despite the relentless downpour, there was an impressive turnout of members. We were honoured by the presence of the British Ambassador to Uruguay, Ms Faye O'Connor. She praised our community for its achievements and charmed us with her engaging personality throughout the evening.

Our Community Cooks outdid themselves, serving a delightful array of treats including lemon squares, brownies, and an assortment of exquisite sandwiches, much to the enjoyment of all present. A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in organising the event and to all who attended.





Keeping Children Safe

Ambassador Faye O'Connor opened a [two-day conference on child safeguarding in the Americas](#) held at the Uruguayan National Human Rights Institution on 18-19 April, organised by British NGO Keeping Children Safe. The Ambassador highlighted that she was pleased to see so many people

representing public and private institutions from various areas, including health, sport and education, committed to keep moving forward in the protection of children and adolescents within organisations, which is a priority for the UK and for Uruguay.



HMS Agamemnon Event

At an event at the Residence on 4 April, [British archaeological experts from Southampton University](#) presented their preliminary research findings of the wreck of Admiral Nelson's favourite ship, HMS Agamemnon.

The team were able to tour the shipwreck area in Maldonado. This is a project that will see British and Uruguayan counterparts working together for the promotion of maritime archaeological research to protect a great historical treasure.

Chevening Scholars Selection Process Finished

Embassy staff, together with members of ANII and the Graduates of British Universities Association were part of the [Chevening interviews panels](#) to select this year's scholars who will study masters degrees of their choice in various universities around the UK this year. Selected candidates will be announced in June.

Applications for 2025-26 will open next August/September. Details follow on both our own and @CheveningFCDO social media!



English Language Duel

Have you seen Ambassador Faye O'Connor's duel with her US opposite number? To mark English Language Day on 23rd April, HMA and USA Ambassador to Uruguay, Heide Fulton, collaborated in a fun video that showcases a few differences between British and American English.

[Watch the video and suggest other words!](#)



THE BRITISH SCHOOLS
Founded 1908

Flashdance

THE MUSICAL

GET READY
TO DANCE TO THE
80S CLASSICS

WHAT A FEELING, MANIAC, GLORIA,
I LOVE ROCK 'N' ROLL, AND MORE!

COMING
SOON

The Anglo School stands by 'Sanamos Aprendiendo'

In a heartwarming display of solidarity, The Anglo School reaffirms its support for the 'Sanamos Aprendiendo' program as it enters its third year of sponsorship. This initiative, created by the Fundación Humaniza Josefina, remains deeply rooted in our school's ethos, reflecting the resilience and compassion inspired by Josefina Ruiz's legacy.

Honouring Josefina's memory

Josefina Ruiz, a beloved student of The Anglo School Carrasco, continues to serve as a source of inspiration. Despite her battle with cancer, Josefina's unwavering determination to pursue education laid the groundwork for 'Sanamos Aprendiendo'. Her parents, motivated by Josefina's bravery, established the program to ensure that children undergoing medical treatments could maintain their educational journey amidst challenging circumstances.

A tradition of togetherness

Building on the success of previous years, last Saturday 6th April The Anglo School hosted the third annual 'Sanamos Aprendiendo' event, fostering a sense of community and support. Students, families,



graduates, staff and friends came together for a day filled with meaningful activities and heartfelt connections. From engaging games to shared meals, each moment strengthened the bonds that unite us in our shared mission.

Gratitude and generosity

The overwhelming success of the fundraising event emphasizes the steady support of our community. Through their generosity and enthusiasm, attendees demonstrated the profound impact of collective action on the lives of others. We extend our deepest gratitude to Josefina's parents for their presence and inspiration, as well as to all who contributed to making this event a resounding success.

Looking ahead

As we embark on another year of partnership with 'Sanamos Aprendiendo', we reaffirm our commitment to providing educational opportunities for hospitalized children. Through ongoing fundraising efforts and community engagement, we remain steadfast in our mission to foster hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

Celebrating Anglo’s 90 years of excellence:
join us for two very special events in May



As we celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Anglo, we are thrilled to invite you to join us for two very special events on 4th and 11th May.

Event 1: Workshop - May 4th, Anglo Salto - In-Person

In commemoration of our 90 years of educational excellence, we are hosting an in-person workshop at Anglo Salto on May 4th. This workshop will provide preparation centres with the opportunity for discussion about the impact of international exams on learning and teaching. Join us as we come together to explore teaching strategies, exchange insights, and deepen our collective knowledge in the spirit of continuous professional development.

Event 2: Joint Webinar with Cambridge English and Talk on AI by Gerardo Valazza - May 11th, Online

As part of our anniversary celebrations, we are delighted to collaborate with Cambridge English to bring you a special joint webinar on May 11th. This online event, featuring a talk on Artificial Intelligence (AI) by Gerardo Valazza and a talk on Cambridge Digital by Mabel Rivero (Cambridge) and Nora Ramos (Anglo) is an opportunity to delve into the transformative potential of AI in education and explore how it can enhance teaching and learning experiences for the benefit of educators and students alike.

These events are not only opportunities for professional development but also a celebration of the contributions of the Anglo community over the past nine decades. As we look back on our journey of growth and excellence, we invite you to join us.

CAMBRIDGE English
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90 YEARS | **ANGLO**

Gerardo Valazza
May 11th - 10.00 am

Nora Ramos
May 11th - 11.00 am

Mabel Rivero
May 11th - 11.00 am

Members of the British
Society: Special Discount



TEATRO DEL
ANGLO

LA COARTADA

Dirección: Pablo Dive

Texto: Juan Luis Granato

2da TEMPORADA



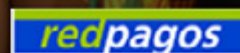
Luciana González

Pablo Isasmendi

Danna Liberman

Sebastián Rebollo

2x1 MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY



Saturdays, May - 9.00 pm
William Shakespeare Theatre - San José 1426

For further information please e-mail: teatro@anglo.edu.uy

Diabetes: More common than we may realize.

Currently considered a pandemic, it affects around 550 million people worldwide.

Diabetes is a chronic, metabolic disease which produces hyperglycaemia. The elevated blood glucose levels result from deficiencies in both the production and effectiveness of insulin.

Type 1 Diabetes

It is more common in children, adolescents and young adults, but can occur at any age. 10% of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes. It arises from an autoimmune response where the body's defenses no longer recognize insulin-producing cells as their own. This leads to an inflammatory attack and progressive destruction of these cells until insulin secretion ceases.

Type 2 Diabetes

It is the most common, accounting for 90% of all diabetes cases. It mainly occurs in adults, particularly in older individuals, and its prevalence increases with age, although it can also develop in children. The rising prevalence is mainly due to lifestyle changes and unhealthy dietary habits.

Gestational Diabetes

It is quite common and occurs during pregnancy, usually disappearing after delivery. In 99% of cases, the individual has a normal glucose metabolism. However, it is a warning, since someone who develops gestational diabetes in one or more pregnancies has a higher predisposition to develop it in the future.

Symptoms

Symptoms occur when there is significant hyperglycaemia. If glucose levels are not very high, they remain asymptomatic for a long period of time. This delays diagnosis, often leading to many years of undetected illness. When blood sugar levels are high, typical symptoms include excessive thirst (polydipsia), frequent urination (polyuria) and increased appetite followed by weight loss. It is somewhat paradoxical. Initially, weight loss occurs despite increased food intake.

However, in advanced stages, the person may experience acute complications of the disease. This represents the highest degree of glucose imbalance, known as diabetic ketoacidosis or, in some cases, hyperosmolar hyperglycemic state.

It is not a reversible condition. In diabetes, we use the term "remission" because the condition always lingers, giving the individual the opportunity to normalize his/her glucose levels.

Why has it increased in recent years?

It is mainly due to our lifestyle. There is a concerted effort worldwide to increase prevention by promoting changes in our daily lives: increasing physical activity, improving diet, avoiding ultra-processed foods, etc. This approach primarily aims to prevent the development of Type 2 Diabetes, a condition that can be prevented 100%.

Article written from a podcast from Humana by Dra. Silvia García.



The story is not even about the children or the small team who worked so tirelessly to bring so many to England. All of these appear in the periphery, but only in a way that highlights the real story that is being presented by the filmmakers.

The real story begins with Winton's heart of compassion; energized, focused and determined. He sees the need of children and wants to help. Help turns out to mean an immediate reordering of his life and full commitment of every available resource in what becomes a desperate race against time.

The rescue of the children is not the main story. The powerful impact comes by telling the story of the young Nicolas during that desperate time from the perspective of an aged, veteran Nicolas Winton as he continues to live with the deep, mixed emotions of sorrow, regret, and even guilt for the children who were beyond his reach and capacity to save.

The story is a true one and, if you watch it, you will recognize parts of the movie from clips you have seen on YouTube. It is ultimately uplifting as a community comes together to help him recognize that what he accomplished brought the gift of life to many.

“Save a life, save the world.”, a Jewish Rabbi told the young Winton. Nicolas Winton wants to save more than a life, but he is not trying to save the world.

I think “Lazos de Vida” challenges us to reflect on our own choices. But the power of the story is in older individuals recognizing and thanking this man who has made a difference to them and to so many. Who made a difference in your life? Perhaps some words of grateful recognition might make a difference for them if they hear from you today!

John Hamilton

Pastor, Christ Church



Recently my wife Lisa and I watched “One Life” in the movie theater. The movie was a powerfully moving portrait of a young English man, Nicolas Winton and his courageous effort to rescue refugee children from the city of Prague in the weeks, days and hours ahead of the Nazi invasion. I recommend it in our church service as an important film for everyone to watch.

What I failed to mention is that the movie is more of a dramatic documentary than a historical novel. It is a story occurring during the onset of the 2nd World War, but it is not really about the war.



Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

Spanish

TUESDAY In-Person 9:30-11:30am

WEDNESDAY In-Person 7:30-9:30pm

WEDNESDAY Online 8:00-10:00pm

THURSDAY In-Person 7:30-9:30pm

Inglés

TUESDAY In-Person 9:30-11:30am

WEDNESDAY In-Person 7:30-9:30pm

Starting the second week of April

Calling for the St. Andrew's Society of Uruguay's Annual General Meeting

Dear Members and Friends of the Society,

We are delighted to extend a warm invitation to all members of the St. Andrew's Society of Uruguay to join us for our Annual General Meeting which will take place on Saturday, May 11th, at 3:00 PM, at the British Cemetery's Britannia Hall.

Date: Saturday, May 11th, 2024

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: Britannia Hall, British Cemetery, Rivera 3868

Agenda items will include:

President's Address: A reflection on the past year and a vision for the year ahead.

Treasurer's Report: Review of financial statements and budgetary considerations.

Any Other Business: Open floor for additional discussions or concerns.

Kindly confirm your attendance by Whatsapp at [094 414 761](https://wa.me/094414761)



Sincerely,

Germán Villar Drever

President

St. Andrew's Society of Uruguay





LUNCH INVITATION

Wednesday
8th of May
at 12:15 PM

Senator
Jorge Gandini

Precandidate for the
Presidency of Uruguay for
the National Party



Parva Domus, Punta Carretas

Bvar Artigas 136, Esq. Parva Domus

Those in need of a special menu (celiac, diabetic, vegetarian, etc.)
please notify the Club Secretary in advance to attend to your requirement.

More Information

www.cub.com.uy



THE MONTEVIDEO PLAYERS SOCIETY

Panthers of '69

About the play

This play is a translated and adapted version of Santiago Moncada's "Entre Mujeres" (better known as "Brujas" since its renaming in Argentina). It portrays the meeting 30 years after graduation of five women who attended Catholic boarding school. What seems to be a champagne dinner turns into an inquiry about life and the meaning of happiness, faithfulness, and betrayal.

When?

- Thu, 23/05/24 (Opening night)
- Fri, 24/05/24
- Sat, 25/05/24
- Thu, 30/05/24
- Fri, 31/05/24
- Sat, 01/06/24
- Fri, 07/06/24
- Sat, 08/06/24
- Sun, 09/06/24

Showtime

All shows at 9 PM except Sundays 7 PM
Please factor in time for parking.
Doors open 30 minutes before the start of the performance.
There is NO admittance after the show begins.

To book

[Click here](#)

or scan the QR code.



Pricing

Members - free

Senior citizens (65 or older) &

English students \$ 300

Adults - \$ 450



The Montevideo Players

celebrate

**Towel
Day**

PONT
FANG

In honour of the legendary British author Douglas Adams

Sunday, May 26th 7 pm

Neil Fairless Center · Acevedo Díaz 2324

Tickets

200 \$ Members

300 \$ Non Members

Activities

Short talk about Douglas Adams,
Sci-Fi themed quiz, a game, & more!

This event is in benefit of Animales Sin Hogar (ASH)

A new way to get a Cambridge English Qualification

Available from A2 Key to C2 Proficiency, Cambridge English Qualifications Digital provide an enhanced exam experience and a faster, flexible way to get a Cambridge English Qualification. They test the same knowledge and skills as paper-based exams, with digital features to help you take control and perform at your best.



Platinum
Authorised Exam Centre

Taken on a computer, these exams give students control over elements of the listening, writing and reading, helping them to do their best in their own way. Each candidate receives a randomised set of questions, all equal in terms of task types and difficulty. This means that everyone can focus fully on their own exam and the risk of any answers being copied is minimised. Cambridge English Qualifications Digital are designed with benefits that maximise preparation time, but minimise waiting time.

The same quality exam, but with digital benefits



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Give students the tools they
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step sooner.



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exam centre about their schedule.



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27107555 ext.205



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Authorised Exam Centre

CERT TESOL AWARDS CEREMONY

At the annual Cert TESOL Awards Ceremony, one of the most significant events for the Dickens Institute community, twelve new teachers received their *Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (CertTESOL), after completing a highly enriching course developed by Dickens Institute.

This internationally recognised teacher education qualification, issued by Trinity College London, will provide them with the required skills to teach English around the world, and help their learners communicate with and better understand other cultures, their knowledge and values.

It is therefore, a very huge responsibility and a great honour for Dickens Institute to offer this programme and be the only validated course provider in Uruguay since 1992.

During a very moving ceremony, graduates read heartfelt speeches expressing their gratitude to the course tutors, the Dickens authorities and staff and also to their own families for their support during the course. Dickens General Director Ms Sofia Scherschener, the course director, Andrea Cabrera, and the team of tutors, shared their pride for the great achievement of this new cohort with the audience and wished all of them a very successful, rewarding career in English Language Teaching.





The Caravana Nivea

by Tony Beckwith
tony@tonybeckwith.com

It was summertime in Spain and the Nivea Company's marketing department hired a team of five promoters to tour the beaches of the Costa Brava. We were all young, multilingual, and enthusiastic. Our job was to promote Nivea's tanning lotion to the European sun worshippers who came south every summer in search of the perfect bronze. We were to drive two station wagons—the *Caravana Nivea*—from the French border down to the town of Sitges, just south of Barcelona. Under normal circumstances we could easily cover this distance in less than a day. But since we were to stop overnight at every village and town on the coast along the way, our journey would take a whole month.

We pulled into a different town every afternoon, nosing through sleepy, narrow streets and along the coast road bordering the beach. Each vehicle had a large, menacing loudspeaker mounted on the roof. With broadcast equipment set to maximum volume, we bombarded residents and tourists with loud (some would say obnoxious) music interspersed with ad-libbed announcements in seven languages. Five sensitive linguists took turns shattering the peaceful siesta hours with a simple message: "Bring some Nivea suntan lotion to the beach tomorrow and receive an incredibly exciting gift."

It was July 1969, the month that mankind took a "giant leap" and landed on the moon. Anything to do with outer space had the public's full attention and Nivea had provided us with the perfect gimmick. Everyone is familiar with Frisbees now, but at that time they were unknown in Spain. Nivea introduced them that summer along the Costa Brava under the name OVI (meaning Identified Flying Object, IFO—a play on the Spanish acronym OVNI, which is the equivalent of the English UFO). The Frisbees were dark blue, with *Nivea* stencilled in white letters across the top, making them look just like the lid of the company's signature moisturizing cream. It was a well-thought-out campaign.

During the summer in those days the Costa Brava was a mosh pit of hedonism and carefree fun. The nations mingled on the beaches; everyone's true skin colour revealed for

all the world to see. Champagne of extremely modest pretensions flowed like water. There was more paella per square foot here than anywhere in the world. Nightclubs were like asylums where the crazy ones danced till sunup then ran naked into the sea.

In the late morning, Team Nivea stood—slightly wilted—at water's edge, in our white slacks, navy blue polo shirts, and espadrilles, tossing the OVIs up against the onshore breeze. The marketing boys had trained us in the fine art of throwing the Frisbee, and as the discs returned to our hands like graceful boomerangs, the crowd gathered. Everyone on the beach wanted an OVI: they were the Beanie Babies of 1969. People implored us to hold one for them while they ran to buy some Nivea product at the nearest store. As the purveyors of this latest fad, we were the centre of attention on the beach, and were mobbed like rock stars by our desperate fans. But when our day's stock of OVIs had all been given away our show was over, and it was time for lunch.

Then we would move on to the next town and do it all over again. It was an excruciating schedule. Our contract required us to spend our evening hours cruising the bars and nightclubs, talking to tourists from all over Europe, encouraging everyone to come to the beach the following day and receive the most exciting trinket they had ever seen. This demanding public relations work kept us up till all hours, and on more than one morning we watched the sunrise as we stood immersed up to our chins in the deliciously cool sea.

The campaign was a huge success; Nivea sales skyrocketed in coastal areas that summer. We were supplied with OVIs by the truckload and scattered them by the thousands along the ancient Mediterranean shore where Phoenician traders once peddled their goods. But though everyone enjoyed playing with this new toy, the long-suffering residents of the towns along our route were no doubt greatly relieved when we moved on and the deafening soundtrack of the *Caravana Nivea* faded into the distance.



Back to the Future XIII

by Carl Sloth Knudsen
csk1@netgate.com.uy

From the window of the second floor of our family house in Pocitos, at the corner of Ellauri / Jose Marti in the year 1952 you could see the River Plate glittering - a marvellous experience – of course later on, exchanged with the picture of tall buildings under construction. I used to walk along the rambla Pocitos, where a few houses still were holding on, waiting to be transformed. They were already closed and covered, so with my good friend George Laindekar we dug holes in the gardens, and cut some of the underground lead water pipes, melted them into plumbs, and sold them to fishermen who used them with their nets generally on Fridays if it didn't rain.

The nets were made of cotton and very heavy due to the amount of lead involved. It required at least five people on each side when bringing them to the beach. Sometimes they also employed a horse. They used to have a two wheeled wooden truck to transport, clean, and sell the fish and would cry out loudly "Fresh Fish, Fresh Fish" through Pocitos streets. But one day, suddenly, they disappeared, I do not know why. Maybe fish had left the coast, or it had been forbidden to fish from a bathing beach, really, I am not aware. Strange enough later on in time, my father being at the time General Consul of Denmark in Uruguay together with a group of prominent Uruguayan citizens, FAO and state institution called "SOYP", brought four Danish wooden fishing trawlers from the North Sea with crew members.

The idea was to teach Uruguay how to fish. Afterwards, the crews returned to Denmark and the vessels were given to SOYP. A turning point for Uruguay, generating work and richness for the country. One of the Danish crew members told my father, that at the beginning it was very hard for the Uruguayan crew to haul the net onboard, especially after having "puchero" for lunch. So, they had to change the "momentum" in order not to risk them falling overboard. At the time, the nets were hand lifted. Years later, one of the boats "ISLA DE FLORES" went on ground in "Banco Ingles" and a storm started unfolding.

Help was requested, and the Naval Army came and rescued three men in a very delicate state. They had fastened themselves to the mast. Unfortunately, this accident took the life of thirteen sailors. Very sad story for Uruguay. My father was very upset. Another boat is still around. It is called "LA PALOMA" and as a coincidence, the owner, Juan Setting, was my daughters (Karina) father-in-law, who unfortunately passed away a few years ago. A very well-known and cared for person in the Uruguayan fishing community.

I do not know the story of the remaining boats and if they still exist. All these happenings bring me back to the end of 1970, when I worked in Sudamtex, Colonia. My good friend Walter Strasser (chief of the Spinning Department) and myself had a dream regarding a fishing project which we would have called CUPESCA. He had a friend, Mr. Jaime Gaminara, a retired Marine Captain that somehow was connected with SOYP, and Chief for the Uruguayan coast demarcation/security system located in Punta Carretas.

We had the project ready, which included a firm offer for a used fishing factory vessel from Poland with gears, Bader/cutting machines, cooling system and so on, ready for fishing/processing on arrival in Uruguay - including know how-. The price U\$S 800.000, -. Small down payment, and balance withing two years of operation, with bank guarantee. Down payment we could manage, and only needed a bank guarantee.

We visited Mr. Pablo Mieres, who was the Green Party second man (later called Independent Party). We met him on his office staircase at 18 de Julio Street. Introducing ourselves and explaining the situation, he stated that Banco República had no guarantee portfolio for the fishing industry. A couple of days later, United Merchants & Manufacturers in USA owners of Sudamtex S.A., offered me a leading job in Brazil so that ended my fishing dream and started a new adventure, coming next.



Some of My Remarkable Professors

by Juan José Castillos
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Whenever you are lucky enough to have professors that motivate their students, besides being brilliant researchers and educators, they leave an indelible mark on you, sometimes enhancing your own abilities or also underlining your limitations.

When I was in High School, one of our history teachers was Blanca Traversoni, sister to another illustrious local historian. Not only was she a good teacher but also had in her home a History Club, which she invited us to join.

I remember at the time there was a new film on the life of Martin Luther that she invited us to watch. Since I was still then a devout catholic, I had to refuse, invoking my beliefs. Little I knew then about his famous book viciously attacking the Jews, which would have been an added reason to refuse to attend.

I have a clear image of her face when I expressed my views, respectful for my beliefs, but at the same time, regretting my lack of open-mindedness at the time. Her influence reinforced my passion for all things historical.

In my art classes our professor was a famous painter, Eduardo Vernazza. He was disgusted by my crude artistic renderings and was about to fail me that year, but my other professors convinced him that due to my excellent qualifications on all the other subjects, that would have been an injustice. So, he relented and let me pass.

Another professor, this time of English, Salomón Algazzi, impressed me by his almost perfect Oxford accent, that I could never have been able to imitate. My late wife told me when I mentioned him, that his accent was so exaggerated that it seemed very artificial and even funny. One of her, Uruguayan born and bred fellow workers, also had the same style of pronunciation that she found very funny. Nevertheless, I couldn't help admiring Algazzi's perfect pronunciation, even if some found it exaggerated.

Then when in my pursuit of Nuclear Physics, I tried to enter the Faculty of Engineering of the state university, I passed with flying colours all subjects, except their advanced mathematics.

We had for Analytic Mathematics a professor named Cousillas, for Analytic Geometry, Vales, a gold medal professor, and for Descriptive Geometry, Ferrer. I repeatedly failed them all. I remember that the latter had pink cheeks and nose, as if he were a heavy drinker, that he wasn't, and once he told us: imagine that a straight line is a circumference of infinite radius and a dot as a circumference of zero radius. We all students thought he had been at a binge the night before and it was the liquor speaking. But he was trying to transmit concepts that at the time were beyond our understanding.

Surprisingly, when I switched to the Faculty of Chemistry, I passed the mathematics exam when three professors sat to interrogate me, with relative ease. Perhaps their kind of maths was less esoteric and complex.

Another professor, this time at the Faculty of Chemistry, Lumen Cabezudo, who had a very tragic life history, made me very happy by making available to me, still a teenager, the bible of atomistics, a huge volume of the Faculty Library, with the nuclear cross sections of many hundreds of elements and their isotopes.

Then when I took up Ancient History at the state university, the professor there, Armando Pirotto, was a great motivator. I was lucky enough at the time to have a short paper published in a British very eminent Journal and when an Italian archaeologist visited Uruguay to lecture, he embarrassed me by saying that I was one of his favourite students, with an article already published in a European Journal. I dislike being praised in public in my presence, but he meant well.

It was at that time that Elise Baumgartel, of Oxford University in the UK, after reading this article, wrote me to say that she was surprised to see that Montevideo could produce so promising students of Egyptology, as I seemed to be.

All these professors, regardless of the results they had with me, left a mark that made me respect them all, in a Uruguay that still had such brilliant people teaching and contributing to our education and to our national culture.



Good Deeds

by Juan José Castillos
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We all do all sorts of things in life, some good, some bad, it is part of our human nature, and all we can do is hope that the good ones will at the end of our lives outweigh the bad ones.

While I was a student at the Faculty of Chemistry, not being employable yet, since the study workload was quite heavy, I found out that there was an opening in the Faculty Library for an assistant. I immediately applied and found out that there were several other fellow students also interested in the position.

As it is customary in such cases, the issue was decided by casting lots and let fortune decide. We agreed to meet for the purpose a few days later.

As I took the bus back home, another of the interested parties, a young girl, sat next to me and we got engaged in conversation. She was from Tacuarembó and being her family quite poor, was studying on a scholarship and staying at a convent where the sisters offered her free accommodation.

Then to my great surprise and consternation, she started crying. I sincerely hope I get the job, she said, because although I get free lodging, that doesn't cover other expenses and I often have to eat just boiled potatoes for lunch and dinner. It is so hard to remain what you could call a good girl in the face of such hardship. I remained silent and didn't know how to comfort her.

Before we had the meeting and she not being there yet, I strongly suggested we give her the chance in view of her difficulties. Another student, a married lady, strongly objected, it is not the first time we have to let someone else get the job and I need the money. Fortunately, most of us prevailed and let the poor girl take the job.

On another occasion, I was working as translator of foreign correspondence for an elderly businessman, a local representative of tobacco and other big firms. I became friendly with his secretary and after some time, she confided in me by saying that every time the owner went to Europe in business, he brought sexy lingerie and asked her in the privacy of his office and after working hours, to try them on to see what they looked like 'on the flesh', so to speak.

Being an elderly man, things didn't get beyond that, but she found it all very unpleasant. Why don't you quit, I asked her? You don't have to endure that sort of treatment. Then she said that her salary was the main support of her family, her father was an Italian count and found any sort of employment as below his status. He spent all day on his robe reading newspapers.

She had at the time been dating for a couple of years a young man who worked for a local British insurance company, but she was already 27 years old and he showed no sign to want to marry her. My advice was, go to his apartment, prepare for him a nice dinner and after that, say that you are not getting any younger and need to come to some decision or else, end the relationship. Maybe because this young British fellow saw as not a minor accomplishment to marry the daughter of a count, it worked and I shortly after received an invitation for the wedding. Later on, they moved to England.

The businessman was not unaware of all this, because when I decided to quit my job, he paid me the balance of my earnings and then looked at me, expecting some sort of insulting remarks due to his behaviour. But I just thanked him and was about to leave, so he said: How wise you are, you don't spit up into the air, it might fall all over your face. Oh, no, sir, I replied, I have no idea what you're talking about. Later on, he tried to rehire me, but I was not interested.

CORNED BEEF SANDWICH



An Uncomfortable Truth

by Juan Pablo Milessi
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The internet has undeniably revolutionized our lives, connecting us to vast amounts of information, facilitating communication across continents, and transforming industries. Yet, amid the convenience and innovation it brings, there lies a shadowy underbelly that often goes unnoticed – the profound impact of the internet on society as a whole. While we marvel at the wonders of technology, we must also acknowledge the hidden consequences that permeate our personal lives and shape the destinies of entire populations.

In the early days of computing, we were introduced to the concept of computer viruses – malicious programs designed to wreak havoc on individual machines. However, as technology advanced, so too did the sophistication of cyber threats. Today, we face a new breed of viruses that operate stealthily, secretly extracting personal information without the user’s knowledge. These modern-day threats, often referred to by different names, pose a far greater danger than simply breaking a computer’s hardware – they infiltrate our privacy and compromise our security and the future without leaving a trace.

The idea that computers can manipulate people’s emotions and opinions online is not unfounded. In fact, this is a widely recognized concern in areas such as digital ethics and psychology. Through targeted advertising, algorithmic content curation, and persuasive messaging techniques, computers and algorithms can indeed influence human emotions and opinions.

Social media platforms and other online services often collect vast amounts of data about users, including their preferences, behaviours, and even emotional states. This data is then used to tailor content and advertisements to individuals in ways that are intended to maximize

engagement and influence behaviour and public opinion.

Furthermore, research in fields such as behavioural economics and psychology has demonstrated that subtle cues and manipulations in online environments can have significant effects on human decision-making and attitudes. This includes techniques such as social proof, scarcity, and priming, which can be employed algorithmically to nudge users in particular directions.

For example, online retailers might use messages like “Only 3 items left in stock!” or “Sale ends in 24 hours!” to create a sense of urgency and encourage immediate action from consumers. By leveraging scarcity, businesses and advertisers can increase demand and drive sales.

Social media platforms might algorithmically prioritize content that primes users to feel a certain way, such as by showing them posts or articles that evoke specific emotions or reinforce particular beliefs. By priming users in this way, platforms can influence their subsequent behaviour, such as the content they engage with or the opinions they express.

Despite these realities, many people may still be unaware of the extent to which their emotions and opinions are being manipulated online. This could be due to a lack of transparency from technology companies about their data collection and manipulation practices, as well as a general lack of digital literacy among the population.

Additionally, there may be psychological barriers to accepting the idea that one’s emotions and opinions are being manipulated, as it can be unsettling to think that one’s autonomy and agency are being undermined in this way.

Continued on the next page...

CORNERED BEEF SANDWICH

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Social networks have become ubiquitous in our digital age, serving as virtual hubs where we connect, share, and interact with others. Behind the scenes, intricate algorithms analyse our online behaviour, crafting detailed profiles that offer insights into our preferences, interests, and even our state of mind. While we willingly give away personal information on these platforms, the irony lies in our reluctance to acknowledge the potential consequences of our digital footprint. We freely entrust our data to the likes of Facebook and Twitter, unaware of the implications of relinquishing control over our privacy.

The algorithms that govern our online experiences wield immense power, shaping the narratives we encounter and influencing our perceptions of the world. Whether through targeted advertisements or curated news feeds, these algorithms have the ability to sway public opinion and manipulate collective thought. The prevalence of negative content further exacerbates this phenomenon, as individuals are drawn into a cycle of engagement driven by emotion rather than reason. With every comment and reaction, we unwittingly contribute to the construction of our digital identities, revealing intimate aspects of ourselves to unseen observers.

Amidst the complexities of the digital landscape, there exists a pressing need for individual and societal awareness. We must recognize the dual nature of the internet – a tool for empowerment and a potential instrument of manipulation. As guardians of our digital sovereignty, we bear a collective responsibility to educate ourselves and others about the risks posed by online threats and the importance of safeguarding our privacy. By fostering a culture of digital literacy and data protection, we can navigate the intricacies of the internet with greater resilience and awareness.

The internet has forever altered the fabric of society, ushering in an era of unprecedented connectivity and innovation. Yet, as we marvel at its wonders, we must not turn a blind eye to the unseen effects that lurk beneath the surface. From the insidious threat of cyber-attacks to the subtle manipulation of public opinion, the internet exerts a profound influence on our lives, both individually and collectively. By embracing a stance of vigilance and responsibility, we can harness the transformative power of technology while safeguarding the values that define us as a society. In the digital age, awareness is not merely a choice – it is a necessity.

LAMB CHOPS

HEAD COOK

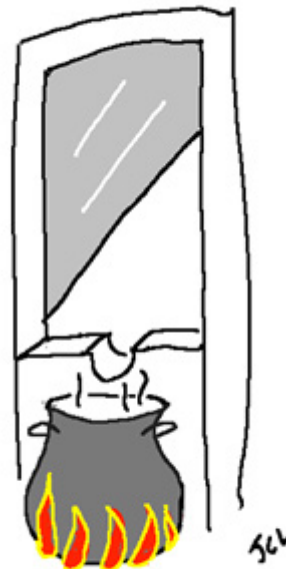
**I got a job in the palace
I was Head Cook to the King
Each time the guillotine rose and fell
My bell would ring**

**I did tête d'amant de la Reine à la sauge
Tête de républicain
Tête d'adultère, sauce Limoges**

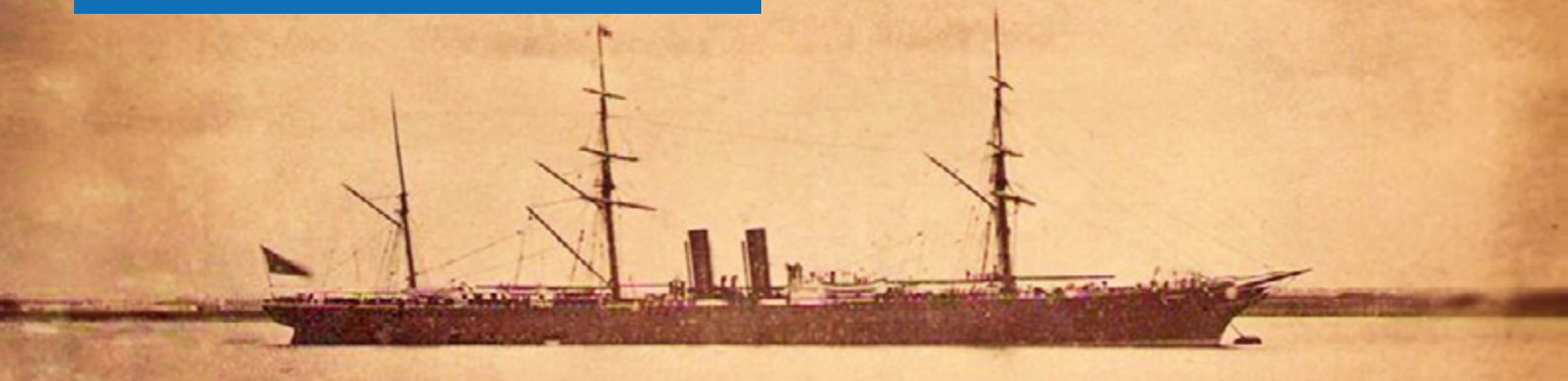
And of course

Coq au vin

by Jonathan Lamb
vozinglesa@gmail.com



All the takings from Jonathan's second comedy collection, *Speaky Stuff*, go to Ukrainian Disaster Relief at www.dec.org.uk. You can either give him \$1000 via vozinglesa@gmail.com or donate them direct and he'll send you a book, with gift dedication if required.



Steerage Cruise Lines

by Alvaro Cuenca
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Crossing the Atlantic Ocean during the XIX Century was no easy feat for the European migrants that ended up on our shores. Hardships at home that would eventually precipitate the difficult decision of leaving friends and family did not prepare the travellers for the dangerous trip and even more hard life in the colonies. Walking the plank was crossing the Rubicon. There was no turning back and the hazards of the crossing anticipated the hardships to come, as strangers in a strange land.

Uruguayan population during the Age of Imperialism was of European descent, those coming from the Iberian and Italian peninsulas being the overwhelming majority. Britons, though very influential made a very small percentage of the population. Different from the Latins who were usually part of the country's workforce or artisans, the Britons were a white collar migration that usually came with a contract, or money for commerce or to buy land. But if their fate at destination seemed different to other migrants, Britons shared the same danger and discomfort on their Uruguayan-bound trip.

For Britons the ocean trip to the colonies was a mastered art that could end in disaster only because of nature's intervention. Crossing the Atlantic was very different than going eastwards. The long voyage to India took a month but through the inland Mediterranean and the tamed Indian Ocean. They even labelled the best cabin choice for the First-Class passengers who suffered with the Sun and heat of the East: POSH (Port out-bounds, Starboard home), acronym that would eventually mean classy. The Atlantic offered no advantages for the Old Hands. Every class, from the First to steerage suffered the same dampness, cold and heavy seas.

The two main navigation companies that made the UK to the River Plate were the Pacific Steam Navigation Company and the Lamport & Holt. Both had several merchant/passenger ships that made the monthly leg to and from Liverpool, Plymouth and/or Southampton. But as with the East-bounds colonists, not all ships were the same. There were bad, good and POSH ships, depending on the seaworthiness, and most of all the crew, where the captain took a paramount importance to the First Class passengers who had him as their host for the duration of the voyage.

This is what Arthur FitzHerbert recommended his brother Henry in Ireland in a letter dated 1870*: *The best way to come is by the PSNCo, whose offices are in Harrington Street in Liverpool, they are the finest line of steamers in the world. Very large and very comfortable. They take 26 days to come and the fare is £35.* One of the ships that all the Britons of Montevideo praised was the PSNC John Elder, built as a sailing ship in 1870 but turned hybrid sail/steamer in 1872 when it started its regular runs to the River Plate ports. *The Montevideo Times* advertisements of the *John Elder* on December 1891 gave the date of arrival/departure of the ship and the captain's name - H. Perry, for this trip. And it's because Perry was a popular captain and entertainer, known by Montevideo Old Hands who looked to book their tickets under his captaincy.



Letter published in the *Uruguay Weekly* on January 3, 1892: *December 23rd, 1891, to Captain Perry and officers of the PSNC John Elder.*

Dear Captain Perry,

We the undersigned passengers who have had the good fortune to sail so agreeably through the Atlantic in your good old ship, wish to place on record how lucky we consider ourselves in sailing under such a Commander and with such a staff of officers.

We look forward on our next voyage across the ocean, to sailing again in the old John Elder under your cheery countenance and with at least some of our old friends, your officers.

This passenger's wish was not to be. The *PSNC John Elder* sunk next January 17 near Valparaiso, without loss of life. The only casualty of the foundering of the ship being Captain Perry who was blamed for the accident and sacked by the company. Such were the risks and dangers of the Atlantic crossing, shared by passengers and crew.

**From the diary of Eveline FitzHerbert, compiled by her great granddaughter, Christine Cobham.*



The Magic of The Iconic Harrods Store

by Carmen Alvarez
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I recently travelled to the magnificent city of Buenos Aires in search of good heritage locations to photograph. Also, being a columnist of Contact made me feel very interested in finding British traces in the city.

Walking along the famous Florida street you can't help being attracted by the impressive building of Harrods, a retail company that opened in 1914 and closed in 1998 being the only branch of the famous Harrods of London outside the UK.

The beautiful Edwardian style building used to occupy the entire block and it was for many years Buenos Aires' most elegant department store. Designed by British architect Paul Bell Chambers it had cedar wood floors, granite stairs and columns, bevelled glass mirrors, decadent alabaster chandeliers and wrought iron elevators that held 20 people.

Harrods was the place to buy household items, Italian suits, expensive perfume and imported jewellery. The luxurious tearoom instantly became known as the gathering place for the city's elite.

The slogan ran: "an establishment equal to those that constitute the obligatory mecca of Argentinian families visiting Europe".

Virtually any porteño who could afford it frequented Harrods through the years.

In 1998 with the total economic meltdown that would come to Argentina a few years later, Harrods Buenos Aires closed altogether going along with the decline of Florida street and Buenos Aires downtown in general.

Unfortunately, today it is totally empty although we must rejoice that the building is still there and didn't succumb to demolition.

It's what we should call, an abandoned architectural treasure. The reopening of Harrods has been announced several times, but its future is unfortunately completely uncertain.



Lord Byron (1788-1824)

by Lindsey Cordery
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George Gordon, Lord Byron, was one of the famous second generation of English Romantic poets, together with Shelley and Keats. Unlike first-generation Wordsworth and Coleridge who died in old age, these three all died young and tragically so.

Romanticism was a revolution in the arts and in politics, foregrounding the individual and the tenets of the French revolution, liberty, equality, fraternity. Revolutions were bringing independence to countries in America and huge shifts of power in Europe while a generation of writers and artists revolted against 18th-century rationalism, with a resulting variety of new attitudes and activities: a love of nature, the rediscovery of the Middle Ages, the cult of art, a taste for the exotic, a liberal outlook in politics, all of which are found in the works of the English romantic poets and novelists such as Walter Scott.

Any biography of Byron will tell you about his -and his forebears- scandalous lives. His own multiple love affairs, several children (a daughter with his half-sister Augusta); his short marriage to the mathematically-brilliant Annabella Millbank, whom he named "Princess of Parallelograms" (their daughter, Ada Lovelace is recognised as one of the first computer programmers); the unrelenting pursuit of Lady Caroline Lamb, who proclaimed Byron "mad, bad, and dangerous to know", thereby defining the "Byronic hero", like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* and Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. Byron travelled widely, and in Greece today, he is still revered as a hero: in 1824 he died in Missolonghi, while preparing to fight for Greek independence.

And to commemorate the 200th anniversary of his death,
From *Don Juan*:

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twi'x't night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of Empires heave but like some passing waves.

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence.

Byron is remembered in South America too for his commitment to another independence movement- that of Bolívar (Byron named the boat he fitted out for the war effort in Greece "Bolívar"). Although Byron never met Bolívar, he read of his exploits in a chronicle based on the expedition of five thousand British men who fought in South America with the so-called Albion Legion. Byron's grasp of South American issues allowed him to dream of escaping Europe: 'South America! Europe is grown decrepit'. He envisaged South Americans as 'fresh as their world – and fierce as their earthquakes'.

Byron wrote short, lyrical pieces, but of his long, narrative poetry, the best-known are *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, written in mock epic style, containing exotic locations, romance, and adventure. However, as it laughed at religion, attacked public figures, and made fun of society's values it was also extremely controversial. Byron's publisher John Murray and his friends admired it, but concerned about readers' reactions, suggested cuts. Byron resisted substantial changes, and as a result, cantos I and II were published anonymously in 1819. By this time Byron had exiled himself in Italy for various reasons, but his *Don Juan* shocked and fascinated in England: dazzling, new, original, Shelley himself hailed it as "something wholly new and relative to the age, every word pregnant with immortality" and "Nothing has been written like it in English...(Byron) is building up a drama such as England has not seen". Byron's *Don Juan*, nevertheless, is not the legendary infamous libertine and rogue of Tirso de Molina or Molière and countless others. He is, ultimately, a truly "Byronic" figure.

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace!

And short, lyrical:
So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.



Summer Bugs, Winter Bugs and Future Bugs

by Dr Jorge C Stanham OBE
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The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly raised awareness of our vulnerability to new outbreaks of infectious, potentially serious and fatal diseases, lurking somewhere in the world and finding their way to us. In this post, I'll write about three viral diseases: dengue, seasonal influenza and bird flu. Before I do so, it's important to note that the vaccination controversies that accompanied and followed COVID-19, have led to a drop in general vaccination coverage of children and adults, leading to outbreaks of pertussis (whooping cough) and measles, among other vaccine-preventable diseases – and this is a serious worldwide issue.

At present, dengue is on the increase worldwide and the South American subtropical region is the most affected, mainly in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. Dengue is transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which up to now have thrived in warmer temperatures. Not surprisingly, global warming has expanded the area where these mosquitoes are present. In Uruguay, all nineteen departments have reservoirs of this species. Our Minister of Public Health, Dra Karina Rando, has reassured us that the cooler weather of autumn and winter will reduce cases, but uncertainty is raised by the adaptation of *Aedes aegypti* to lower temperatures, as shown by their presence in the province of Río Negro, where Bariloche is located. Fortunately, a safe vaccine exists (Qdenga) which is administered in 2 doses, 3 months apart, but the effect on the reduction of cases (especially those with a complicated course) takes many months or even longer. For the time-being, use of repellents, mosquito nets, long-sleeved and long-legged clothing plus the elimination of still water where eggs are seeded and larvae grow, is the best strategy.

Seasonal influenza A(H1N1) is expected to surge from May through the winter months. As I write (late April) the vaccination campaign is already in place. Unfortunately, with the worldwide trend in less vaccine uptake, our population has received less doses last year.

To all those who are reading this post, I recommend they receive this vaccine, especially children, pregnant women, adults and those with underlying chronic illnesses, unless contraindicated. Remember: it's free and non-obligatory. Influenza is more serious than COVID-19 and vaccination is clearly effective for either preventing infection or for having a milder course in case you catch it.

Influenza A(H5N1) also known as bird flu (avian influenza) has been around for a quarter of a century. Guess where it started: China! From there, it has spread via bird migrations westwardly to the remainder of Asia and Europe, to North America and southwardly to South America. In Uruguay, bird flu has been found in migrating birds in our coastal lagoons and in isolated (and fortunately controlled) chicken farms. It has spread to sea lions in Patagonia, apparently via infected sea gulls. Worldwide, over the last 2 decades, there have been more than 800 bird-to-human infections, mostly in chicken farms, with a fatality rate of 52%. Recently, in USA, bird-to-dairy cattle transmission has been detected in some 8 states and analysis of DNA in pasteurised milk, has shown that virus is rather widespread in these farm animals. Beef cattle have not been affected. An occasional cow-to-human transmission has occurred, resulting in conjunctivitis and reverse cow-to-bird transmission has also been documented. Fortunately, human-to-human transmission of the virus has been isolated and non-sustained, but the progressive adaptation of influenza A(H5N1) to mammals raises concern. It may take only a few extra mutations to fully adapt to humans. Fortunately, treatment with oseltamivir (Tamiflu) is effective against bird flu and an effective vaccine can be produced at scale, if needed.

In a world fractured by ideology, religion and war, collective awareness of the existential risk of a new pandemic should keep the fabric of humanity from tearing apart. Unfortunately, what we have learned from COVID-19 has not been very encouraging.



A Tragic Royal Rhapsody?

by Richard Empson
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Brilliant, theatrical, excessive, doomed: there has never been another band like Queen or a frontman like Freddie Mercury. Over 32 years after Mercury died of bronchopneumonia related to AIDS, Queen's legacy as one of rock's biggest and most controversial bands is still inseparable from him. Queen began and ended with Freddie Mercury. He embodied the band's identity, its triumphs and failings, and he was the psyche whose loss it couldn't survive.

Distilling Queen down to fit a convenient biopic narrative inevitably leaves a whole lot out. The band side-stepped every binary: good taste and bad taste, art and kitsch, gay and straight, rock and pop, funky and rigid, earnest and ironic, pretentious and self-deprecating, silly and profound. Moreover, Freddie Mercury didn't fight against this in order to establish that, the plot of every real-life hero's story. He just kind of did... everything. He was a gay icon who also ruled heavy-metal parking lots. He danced with regal ballets and in shady discos, and head-banged in a sea of mullets. He wrote creamy pop anthems and the nerdiest prog-rock tracks. He wore a unitard on stage and actually appeared dignified. And he never acted as though any of this was strange or unexpected, which convinced his audience to also erase in their minds the artificial boundaries between genres and people. That's why he was unique. However, in the beginning, there was no Freddie Mercury...

He was Farrokh Bulsara, born in 1946, in the British protectorate of Zanzibar, off the east coast of Africa, to a Parsee family that practiced Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. His father was a high-court cashier for the British government, which meant that the family lived in cultural privilege compared to much of the island's population. In 1954, when Farrokh was eight, the Bulsaras sent him to St. Peter's Church of England School, in Panchgani, India. Located 150 miles from Bombay (now Mumbai), St. Peter's was regarded as the best boys boarding school in that part of the world. Farrokh arrived as a terribly shy boy, very self-conscious about his prominent upper teeth that immediately earned him the nickname

'Bucky'. He would remain sensitive about his teeth the rest of his life (often covering his mouth with his hand whenever he smiled), though he came to realise that the pronounced overbite – caused by four extra teeth at the back of his mouth – may have been his greatest blessing, giving his voice its distinctive resonant embouchure.

Many remember Farrokh seeming lonesome at St. Peter's. When some English schoolteachers began calling him Freddie as an affectionate term, he seized the name instantly. He also cultivated his own tastes. Freddie's family had steeped him in opera, but he was also developing a love for Western pop sounds – especially the boisterous piano-based rock & roll of Little Richard and the virtuosic R&B of Fats Domino. When Freddie's aunt discovered that he could hear a tune once, then sit down at the piano and play it, his parents paid for private music tuition. In 1958, he formed a band with some other St. Peter's students. Those who knew him noted that when he was onstage, Freddie was no longer shy: he became quite a flamboyant performer. His teachers remember him as an extremely thin, intense boy, who had a habit of calling people 'darling' (not something boys did in those days). It was soon accepted that Freddie was a budding homosexual, but with him, somehow that was OK.

In 1963, Freddie returned to Zanzibar and his family. British colonial rule ended that same year, and in 1964, the island erupted in revolution and slaughter, so the Bulsaras fled to England, setting near London. Freddie was thus just in time for the era of Swinging London, the times of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Life was opening up for him, and he revelled in every moment of it.

Like Bulsara, the other two men who initiated Queen, Brian May and Roger Taylor, attended London colleges in the mid-1960s. May was tall, lean, soft-spoken, erudite and developing into a visionary guitarist. In 1963, May's father built him an electric guitar with mahogany parts taken from a fireplace; known as the Red Special, it is a guitar that he plays to this day.



MUSICAL BOX

May and a friend, bassist Tim Staffell, were playing in a cover band when they started their college careers. May attended Imperial College, studying maths, physics and astronomy. In 1968, he and Staffell started a new band, Smile, which was closer to the fierce improvisational spirit then gaining ground in British rock. They posted a note on the Imperial College bulletin board seeking a drummer. Roger Taylor, who was preparing for a career in dentistry but hated studying, answered the ad. Taylor was pretty-faced, a bit rowdy, and had an instinctive sense of tonality. With him, Smile began to play as a trio.

Staffell met Freddie Bulsara at Ealing College of Art, where both were students. By then, Bulsara was less reserved: he had long hair, was exotically handsome, even dangerous-looking, and had a sinuous way of moving. Bulsara had been in and out of a couple of bands himself at this time. He liked singing blues – as most bands demanded – but his influences were already much broader: the compositions of Noel Coward; the classical instrumental voicings of Chopin and Mozart; the singing of Dick Powell and Aretha Franklin; and the histrionics of Jimi Hendrix and Liza Minnelli.

Staffell took Bulsara to meet Taylor and May in early 1969. With his fingernails painted black and his effeminate bearing, Bulsara struck them as a little peculiar, but very endearing. After he saw Smile perform, it became Bulsara's ambition to be the band's lead singer. At Smile shows, he was even said to yell, "If I was your singer, I'd show you how it is done".

In early 1970, Staffell became disillusioned with Smile and announced he was leaving the band. By this time, May, Taylor and Bulsara were sharing an apartment. Well aware that Bulsara was a nimble and well-schooled pianist and was developing into an exceptional singer, the others asked him to join them, and in mid-1970, the three decided to form a new band. They went through a handful of bassists before meeting John Deacon in early 1971. Deacon struck everybody as extremely reserved, but he was an exemplary

student (he had a master of science in acoustics and vibration technology) and a quick learner so was hired on the spot. With him, the group was complete.

From the very start, Bulsara began to exert his sway over the rest. He insisted he had come upon the perfect name for the band: Queen. "It's ever so regal," he said in a later interview. "It is a strong name, very universal, with a lot of visual potential and open to all sorts of interpretations".

At this crucial time, Bulsara adopted the stage name Freddie Mercury – in reference to the Roman messenger of the gods. Changing his name was his way of assuming another identity, a vehicle for expressing his truest self. It helped him be whom he wanted to be and hide from the awkwardness that afflicted him when he was merely Farrokh Bulsara. For the public he was a different character, a 'god'.

Mercury convinced the others that how a band looked – how to dress, how a lead singer moved and commanded a stage – was as important as the music itself. With his harlequin bodysuits and angel-wing cloaks that heightened his athletic, roundelay-like movements onstage, Mercury revelled in an androgynous splendour – akin to the styles being forged at the time by David Bowie, T. Rex and Roxy Music. Queen was into glam rock before Bowie, but took too long to become noticed. The band also took a long time to prepare before starting to record, and by the time they released their debut album, "Queen" (1973), the material felt dated to the bandmates themselves.

Queen's early years were beset by questionable business deals and serious health problems (at one point May almost lost an arm to gangrene, and was later hospitalized with hepatitis, then an ulcer). However, though May, Taylor and Deacon could all resort to their original academic careers, for Mercury there was no return, so he persuaded the others that it was worth abjuring any other career plans to take the plunge into rock.

(to be continued...)

PASTEUR INSTITUTE

With the aim of bringing science closer to the young (and the not so young!), the Pasteur Institute of Montevideo has published a book of games and entertainment that includes traditional crosswords, puzzles, word searches, riddles and much more, aimed at learning more about scientific work being carried out in Uruguay in a fun way.

The book, titled "Libro de Juegos de los Pequeños Amigos Pasteur", has 50 coloured pages of quality paper, an attractive design, a comfortable format, and includes more than 25 games. It is designed for boys and girls aged between 6 and 13, who can play both individually and in the company of adults (or teachers). At the end of the book the solutions to all the games are included, so no one is left wondering!

For those interested, the publication is for sale for \$450 at most local bookstores, at some Abitab outlets and at the Pasteur Institute itself. It makes a nice gift for International Book Day, Children's Day, or other such occasions.

Being a local publication made for the Uruguayan public, the book also makes a great business gift for companies and institutions to give to clients, employees or members. For those interested in purchasing a minimum of 50 copies, the Pasteur Institute offers good quantity discounts and the option to include the company or institutional logo.





Baby Squid

When looking for something quick and easy to make for lunch or dinner, baby squid (“chipirones”) does not usually spring to mind.

Squid is a product we would normally consume while dining out, especially if travelling in Mediterranean countries like Spain and Italy.

Baby squids are in fact very easy to prepare as long as two basic principles are observed, a high heat source and a short cooking time.

They are not necessarily expensive especially when bought frozen in the major supermarkets of Uruguay. Of course, fresh squid will be better quality, but it is incredibly difficult to find in local markets even though the sellers will probably claim that they are fresh and not pre-frozen.

The frozen version bought from a reputable supplier will have been prepared and packaged while in optimum condition, probably on board the fishing vessel. The freezing process will be fast and efficient to minimize damage to the squid’s texture.

Squid has a mild, sweet meaty taste. They are firm and chewy and should definitely not be rubbery (due to overcooking). They contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help lower triglyceride levels and reduce the risk of high blood pressure and strokes.

The best cooking methods to employ for preparing baby squid are sautéing, deep frying and grilling.

Baby Squid In Garlic And Olive Oil

4 Portions

Ingredients

600 g frozen baby squid cleaned and ready for cooking
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
5 tbsp olive oil
4 cloves garlic finely chopped
2 t.sp sweet paprika
Juice of 1 lemon
2 tbsp chopped parsley

Method

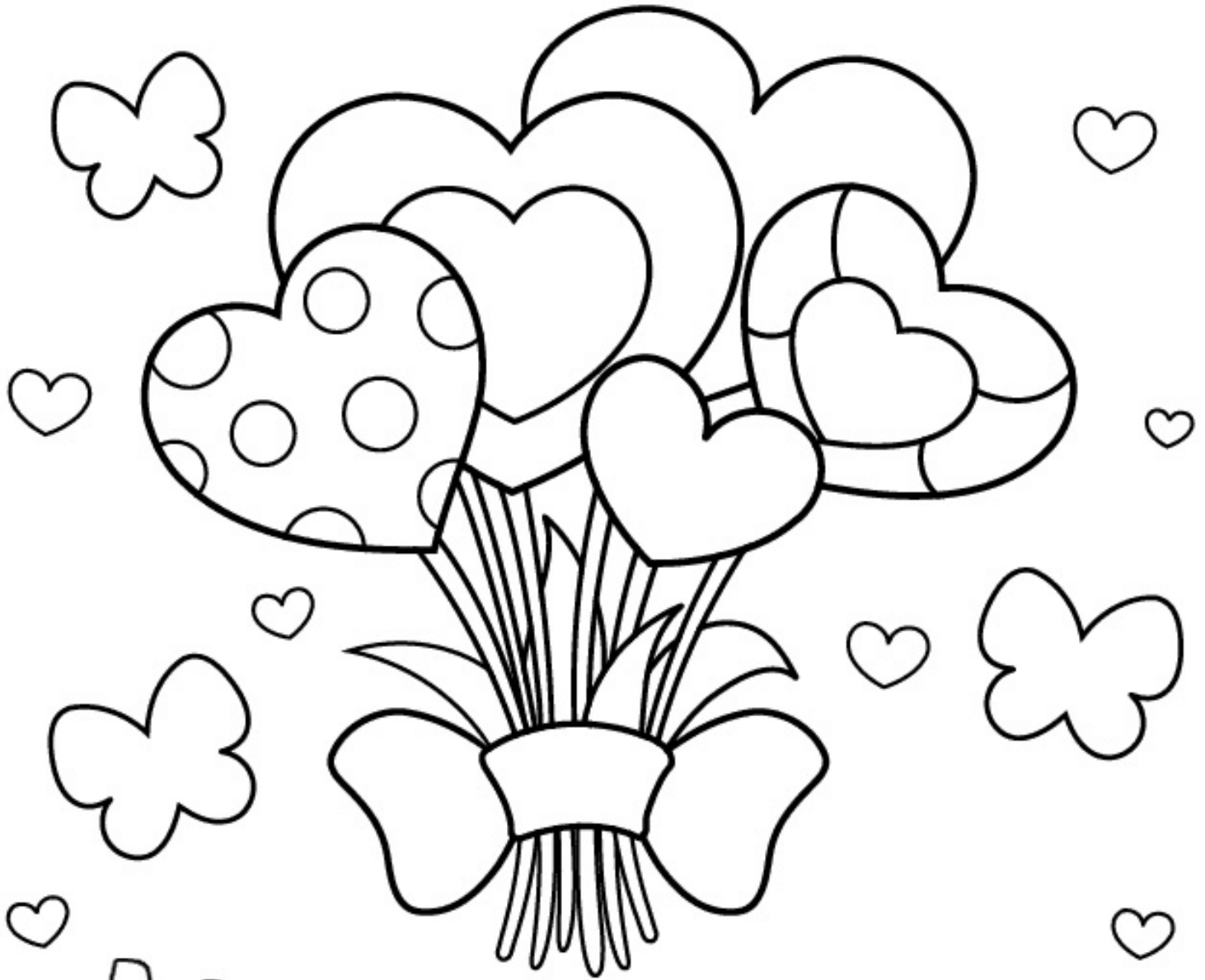
Pat the baby squid dry with absorbent paper and season with salt and freshly grated black pepper. Heat up a wok or large frying pan, add olive oil and the garlic and cook for ten to fifteen seconds taking care not to burn it. Quickly add the squid on the highest heat and toss frequently for between two and three minutes or until they turn opaque and curl up. Add the sweet paprika, lemon juice and parsley, mix in and serve immediately.

Optional:

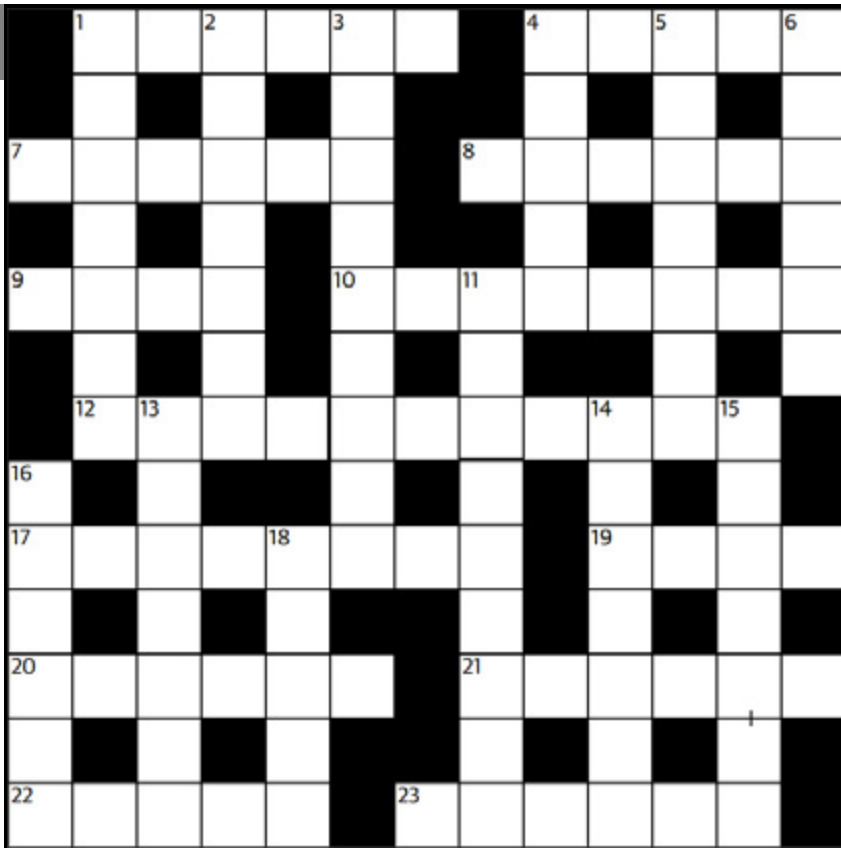
- Serve with plain white rice or mix in with pre-cooked spaghetti
- Serve with crispy bread to dip in the sauce
- Serve with arugula and cherry tomato salad
- Add chopped ginger and finely chopped chili pepper at the same time as the garlic
- Add 4 tbsp soy sauce to the finished dish
- Cook the squid in small batches of 300 g to prevent the cooking temperature dropping and the squid boiling instead of frying in the olive oil.



Happy

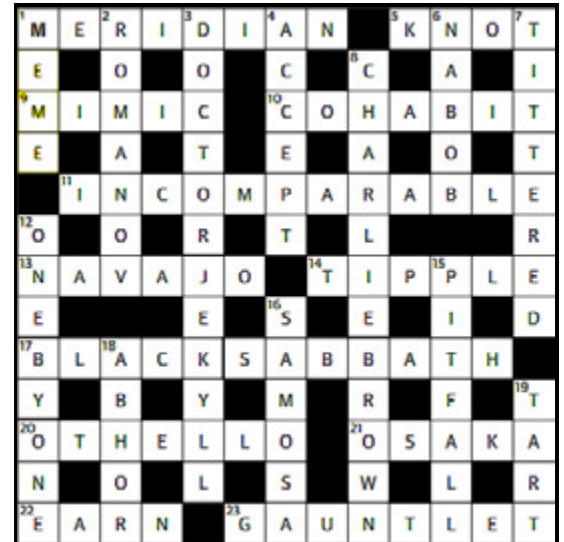


Mother's day



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

April solution:



Across

- 1 Person from the Middle East (6)
- 4 Sour Mediterranean spice (5)
- 7 Star system (6)
- 8 Devour (6)
- 9 Volcano (4)
- 10 Boisterous party (8)
- 12 Dark sour liquid (4,7)
- 17 Raider (8)
- 19 Indian set of notes (4)
- 20 Notice of parking offence (6)
- 21 Tiny ad (anag.) (6)
- 22 Clingy and desperate (5)
- 23 Line in Anglo-Saxon, say (6)

Down

- 1 ___ theory (physics) (7)
- 2 Toil (7)
- 3 Northern capital (9)
- 4 Firework (5)
- 5 Folk dance (7)
- 6 Bright (6)
- 11 Helpmate (3,6)
- 13 Newsreader's aid (7)
- 14 Embellishment (7)
- 15 Cool and left-wing (5-2)
- 16 Loose (6)
- 18 Like toffee? (5)



<https://www.gocomics.com/>



Happy
Mother's
Day

