
U3A in Ludlow

Newsletter 98

February 2020

I am writing this from Egypt where I have gone for various reasons, not least of which was a desire to escape the dire weather and gloomy outlook of January. Tourism numbers are only just in the last year approaching sixty percent of their record year in 2010. I can highly recommend the Nile Valley as a destination.

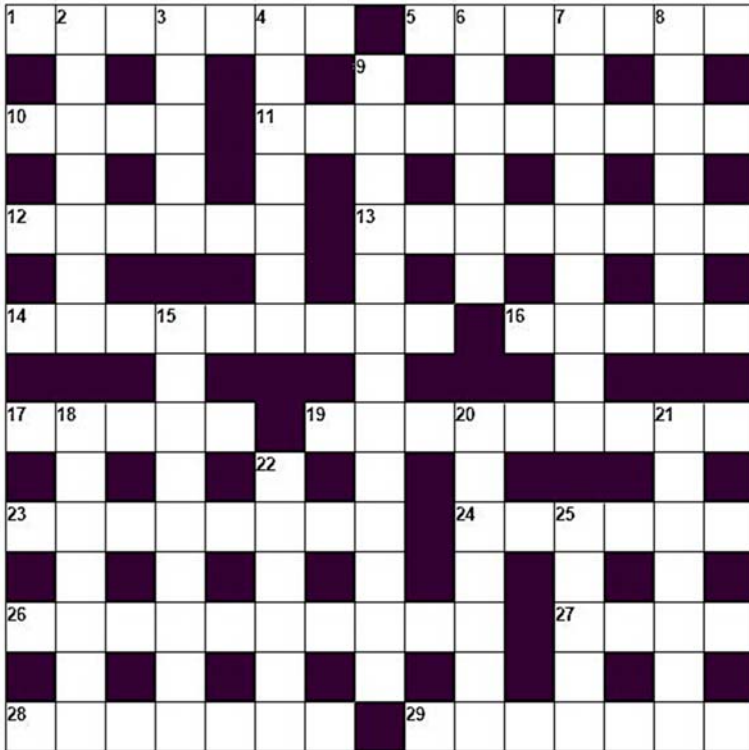
The ancient Greek historian Herodotus called Egypt the "gift of the Nile" and I have been following this sublimely beautiful river from the high dam at Aswan down to Cairo, by dahabiya, rail and plane. The Nile river valley was the site of one of the principal civilisations of the ancient Middle East and home to one of the earliest literate and urban societies. The Pharaohs ruled for 3,000 years until conquered by Alexander the Great in 323 BC when it became an integral part of the Hellenistic world under the Greek Ptolemaic dynasty. This lasted until being conquered by the Romans in 30 BC when it remained part of the Roman Republic and Empire until being conquered yet once more by Muslim Arab armies in AD 639-42.

All along this great river there are astonishing antiquities from all periods of Egypt's history which tell us her story in detail. The great temples at Abu Simbel which were saved by an unlikely example of international cooperation when Lake Nasser was flooded, the temple of Luxor, the temple complex at Karnak, the intricately decorated tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the pyramids are testimony to a complex civilisation. The mythology of ancient Egypt is both mesmerising and bewildering.

Listening to one of my guides interpret hieroglyphics with ease made me realize there is a lot to learn about ancient Egypt and it struck me that others might be like-minded. I am willing to set up a group - if you are interested, please get in touch (u3a@rjhodge.com).

Robert Hodge
Chairman

compiled by the Wednesday U3A Cryptic Crossword Group



Across

- 1 Graze on mixture of carbon and starch (7)
 5 Aid for Cyclops? (7)
 10 Sheep eerily reveal fencing equipment (4)
 11 Pipe shattered each summer (10)
 12 Conundrum for theologian in anger (6)
 13 Had recourse and arranged again (8)
 14 Live north of church home

Down

- 2 Hostage reformed, active and quiet (7)
 3 Noon? Correct! (5)
 4 Host match, say (7)
 6 Fixate on old boys' European vessel (6)
 7 If not white, rose perhaps (9)
 8 Hardy's mate's Victory honours? (7)
 9 Animal over junction; it controls the flow (5,8)

16 Found in Burundi: psoriatic drunkard (5)

17 Convulsion caused by finding shilling in Monty Python menu item (5)

19 Became smitten but got discouraged (4,5)

23 Cads in jumpers? (8)

24 Man of gravity (6)

26 Pastries cooked in oven vaults (3,2,5)

27 Ten volunteers scrap (4)

28 Set free to hire again (7)

29 Oriental Sea rent asunder (7)

15 Suggest annuities need revision (9)

18 Egg on show, without approval (7)

20 First class backup after units prepared for North African destination (7)

21 Cock or queen at the end of Marsupial Road? (7)

22 The wrong sort often disrupt rail travel (6)

25 Centre for vital statistics (5)

2029 Membership

With this Newsletter comes your 2029 Membership Card if you have paid your subscription. If you have not yet paid there is a Pink Renewal Form enclosed, which please complete and return to me with your £12. Membership Cards for outstanding subscriptions will be posted once payment is received.

Your group coordinator will be asking to see your Membership Card in the next few weeks.

If you do not intend to continue your membership please let me know and I will stop pestering you.

Remember to complete the Gift Aid Declaration if you are able and fill in the "consent" box. Gift Aid provides about one sixth of our income and is important to us for maintaining our subscription at £12.

David Hatchell

Treasurer/Membership Secretary

By the end of 2019 there were 8 million people living alone in the United Kingdom, about 3 million of these were over the age of 65. Women in the older age group who were living alone outnumbered men by two to one. If more of us shared a house, would that help the housing crisis? Would sharing a house reduce our carbon footprint? Would sharing a house save us money? Would sharing a house help with problems of loneliness? Loneliness can, of course, be a personal experience which soon passes, but it can also define your life and have a significant effect on both your mental and physical wellbeing.

I met a man a few months ago who was nearing his retirement at the age of 68. He was concerned about the impact that retirement would have on his life and sought to come up with a solution. He was less worried about money than about the limitations that living alone can bring. He did not like the idea of a retirement village. Stories of organised activities and hidden extra charges for things you might prefer to live without, and the thought of not having enough autonomy over his life were somewhat off putting to him.

He wanted to grow vegetables, perhaps even keep a few hens. He wanted to learn new things, travel, visit friends and family, as well as simply enjoying the time to read and listen to music. He could perhaps even have a dog. None of these things are unusual aspirations for retirement, but some are much more difficult to do when you are living alone and solely responsible for everything around you.

He approached some of his friends and over a few glasses of wine they waxed lyrical about the great pleasures to be found in sharing ideas, sharing skills, eating together, socialising: in fact, all the things which are promoted as having great benefit to us human beings. How much easier would life be if there was someone around to water the plants, walk the dog or take in the parcels? How much nicer would life be if there were others to share your thoughts, your opinions, your problems and even to disagree with you!

His vision was a simple one: a property with both personal and communal spaces where a group of friends could live together, share the day-to-day responsibilities and have a far healthier life than they could by living alone. People had fond memories of house sharing in their youth but this was to be even better. There would be no landlords, no shared bathrooms, no empty fridge; and with older and wiser heads they would know how to get along. What was there not to like about that?

Well, plenty it seems, but all arising from the other side of human nature, which is the tendency to be territorial and possessive, and to need to be in control. It seems most of us are not yet ready to give up our own front door, behind which we can rule the roost, however limiting, lonely or impractical that might be. Despite the fact that we know that living alone is not considered to be good for us, there are too many what ifs and too many unknowns for the majority of us to take that leap of faith. It seems we like the idea of companionship and sharing but not enough to pool resources and make it work.

So, until we are ready to make some radical changes, practical and emotional support from friends and neighbours has never been more important. It should not go unrecognized, though, that such help and support are not provided without cost to those who give them. The recipients of such support also have a responsibility to give something back: a smile, a listening ear, a cup of tea and, above all, tolerance. There are so many things we can do for someone else which do not require physical strength or the ability to wield a lawnmower. The feeling of being able to return a favour is good for our confidence and self-worth and generally enhances relationships. How lucky we are in Ludlow that friendship and neighbourliness is, to many of us, a way of life. Long may we continue to support each other but not take it all for granted.

Jude Beautelement

Barbara Ball's comments on interrupting in *Newsletter 96* struck several chords with me: like her, my male partner holds that it forms an essential part of the free to-and-fro sweep of intelligent discussion, whereas, like Barbara's husband, I'm not really comfortable with it, though I'm not pretending I never do it myself. The purpose of interrupting is usually to correct and very often, contradict, more rarely, to confirm and corroborate; and, though I find Barbara's points about gender interesting, I think that how we deal with interruptions is very much a question of temperament and, crucially, of the speed at which we react and are able to adjust, reinforce - or even re-invent - our arguments when we find them strenuously opposed.

In other words, if we are blessed with the ability to think swiftly on our feet, being interrupted can be a stimulating challenge rather than something that has to be patiently dealt with before we can continue with our (eminently reasonable, naturally,) point of view .

I suggest that early experience might have a good deal to do with the way we react to being interrupted; as the youngest of four by quite a few years, I missed the opportunity of being part of the all-in verbal wrestling which I gather was the norm for my siblings as they were growing up; and by the time I could join in, they, being older, were able to deal fairly indulgently with my attempts to be heard unhindered. So I largely missed out on the type of vigorous discussion that may well be instrumental in establishing a capacity to both interrupt and be interrupted with equanimity.

Interrupting is an inevitable part of debate it seems, but why is it that some of us are far more relaxed about it than others?

Margot Sutton

'Don't interrupt me while I'm interrupting' (*Winston Churchill*)

24.02.2020	Bees and their Importance in the Environment: Professional beekeeper and multi-award-winning educator Alison Wakeman will share her knowledge and experience of bees and their by-products.
30.03.2020	U3A Fair and AGM
27.04.2020	Canals and Crime Fiction: The backdrop of author Andy Griffie's talk is our 2200 miles of canals and how they can be the perfect setting for the crime novel.
18.05.2020	Music in Art: Professional musician Sophie Matthews will explore the links between the visual and the aural, drawing on the works of great painters.
29.06.2020	The Work of a Practising Homeopath: Jeremy Derrick will talk about his personal and professional experience of homeopathy, explaining and illustrating how its approach may help and why it is valid for the 21 st century.
28.09.2020	Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again: Author of the Jack Castle series of novels, Philip Caine, will tell us about his adventurous life in the oil industry in distant places, which provided the inspiration for his adventure/thriller novels.
26.10.2020	Albania - the Country Cut off from the World for 41 Years: John Butterworth will give an illustrated talk on the amazing history of this isolated state and compare life under a dictator to the freedoms of today.
30.11.2020	Rolls of Rolls Royce: The biographer of Charles Rolls, Bruce Lawson, will tell us of Mr Rolls - 'a brilliant man'; 'the Richard Branson or James Dyson of the Edwardian Age'.

U3A in Ludlow Committee for 2019/2020			
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The above will change at the AGM to be held on 30th March.

For up-to-date information see the website: www.u3ainludlow.org.uk

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD SOLUTION:

ACROSS: 1 SCRATCH; 5 MONOCLE; 10 EPEE; 11 MEERSCHAUM; 12 RIDDLE; 13 RESORTED; 14 RESIDENCE; 16 DIPSO; 17 SPASM; 19 LOST HEART; 23 BOUNDERS; 24 NEWTON; 26 VOL AU VENTS; 27 IOTA; 28 RELEASE; 29 EASTERN;

DOWN: 2 CAPTIVE; 3 AMEND; 4 COMPERE; 6 OBSESS; 7 OTHERWISE; 8 LAURELS; 9 ZEBRA CROSSING; 15 INSINUATE; 18 PROVOKE; 20 TUNISIA; 21ROOSTER; 22 LEAVES; 25 WAIST

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD IN NEWSLETTER 97

ACROSS: 1 SACKCLOTH; 8 ATOLL; 9 PRESS; 10 NAVAL; 11 HEART; 12 VANITY; 13 ULSTER; 17 CARET; 20 ROUGH; 22 IN USE; 23 CRUDE; 24 REPTILIAN

DOWN: 1 SPAIN; 2 CARAVAN; 3 COUPLET; 4 ORIENT; 5 HARSH
6 GOUDA; 7 ALL STAR; 12 VACANCY; 14 LORELEI; 15 TSUNAMI
16 SHUT UP; 18 REVUE; 19 TIMER; 21 HURON

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