

Summary

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1. August Competition

The August competition with Bernstein-themed grid by etc and clues by Tramp was won by Jim Pennington of Carlisle. Excellent solving! A copy of Frank Paul's 'The Cryptic Pub Quiz' is on its way.

Feedback included:

Amazing grid design incorporating a huge amount of thematic material. Excellent stuff indeed. EL

I found this a great deal of fun to solve and was very impressed with the grid and the amount of thematic material in it. Congrats to "etc". Clues were very nice, starting off with one that (sort of) name-checked both of us! That (AMERICA) was one of my favourite clues, along with those for the other thematic answers as well as DETER, LINED, MULETAS (especially), TOTTER, and WITED. I was a tiny bit perplexed by TONIGHT seeming to have a definition as I couldn't make "working later" mean "on". BL

A fun solve as a familiar subject for me. Shouldn't 'West side story' have been at day 39? JP *Apologies*. Tramp's 3D was very much appreciated and challenging. Bedspread made me laugh among others. The theme was most interesting and finding answers quite tricky. Stephen Sondheim was conspicuous by his absence particularly as he loved crosswords. His favourite was Leon in the old Listener magazine and I received a letter in response to his request thanking me for sending him unsolved Leon crosswords which letter I still have and treasure. PC



Sirius photography

The puzzle noted the 100th anniversary of the birth of Leonard Bernstein born 25th August 1918.

I love Tramp and his clues although there were a few I couldn't parse.

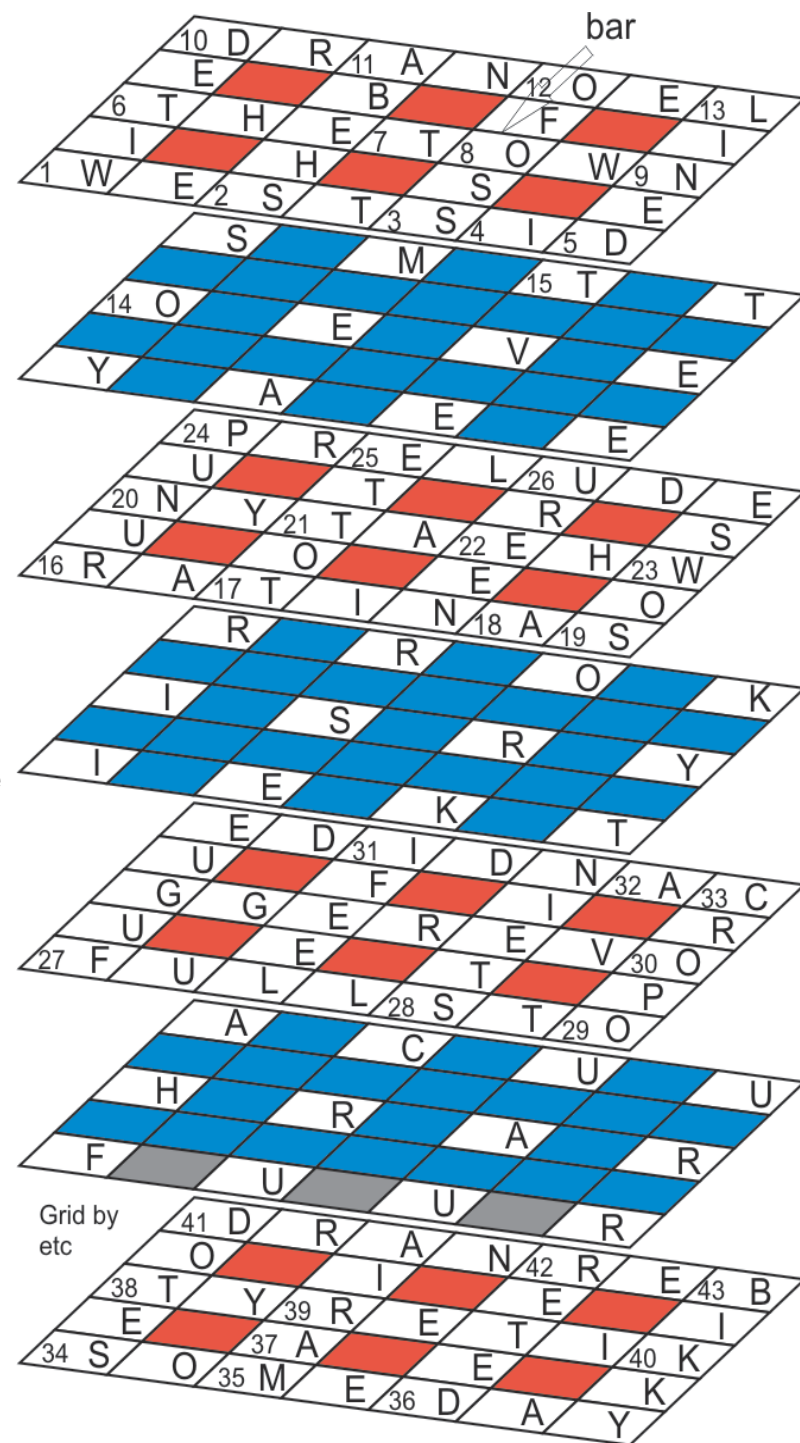
And many thanks to etc for a grid which included so many thematic words.

I once sang under Bernstein's baton - I can't even think of a joke for that! If anyone has a vinyl of the 1970 recording of Bernstein conducting the LSO and its chorus I'm in the hazy picture on the back cover somewhere behind the tympani. In fact being behind the tympani I wondered whether it was worth opening my mouth to sing in the Dies Irae.

Incidentally, this Dies Irae is a good choice to ask assistants to play when buying a hi-fi system. Do people still buy hi-fis? JB's

(I once sang under Nelson's Column)

August 2018 Tramp etc



I feel pretty good about this musical and film by Leonard Bernstein. But don't forget about Stephen Sondheim who wrote the lyrics - all based on Will's Romeo and Juliet. AS

So many extra details included here especially names in addition to the asterisked ones! A fitting tribute to Bernstein. I did some of this while listening to 'West Side Story' on the radio from The Proms! SB'

I loved the inclusion of the references to 'West Side Story' even though musicals are not my fondé. It was an interesting theme and I enjoyed doing the research to solve this. JA

Please find appended my stab at August's challenge, which I enjoyed solving (I also enjoyed listening to the BBC Proms last Saturday, celebrating the centenary of Leonard Bernstein's birth with a presentation of "On the Town").

These challenges seem to have come thick and fast in the last few months - so just as well I've had a few long-haul flights!! SF

Very happy to finish this puzzle after running out of time and brainpower with the two previous ones. A pleasure to compete with throughout. I particularly like MULETAS, the clever hidden reversal of SANITARY and the crafty NEW YORK.

Thank you. MLJ

Thank you for another excellent puzzle. I must admit I had some trouble finding the theme (at one point, even idly scrolling past Leonard Bernstein's month of birth in 1918.) But thanks to Day 14, I feel pretty sure that I finally cracked it. Just one problem (for me at least.) If photo number two, of planes in the sky, represents the Jets how does one extrapolate the Sharks from a blue tractor and a red combine harvester from photo number one? GS

I am most grateful to our man in Paris for reminding me why on Earth I had used a photograph of The Red Arrows for the title page graphic. Ahh! The Jets! That was it. Obviously sharks don't fly in formation.

I loved the inclusion of the references to 'West Side Story' even though musicals are not my fondé. It was an interesting theme and I enjoyed doing the research to solve this. JA

Apologies to Julie for having mislaid her extraordinary feedback on the July puzzle. It was intended for the previous newsletter.

Sent: Monday, 4 June 2018 5:23 PM

To: 'sirius@calendarpuzzles.co.uk' <sirius@calendarpuzzles.co.uk>

Subject: **July Solution**

Dear Eric (and Nora),

Possibly the most fun I have ever had with a crossword, as I am a fanatical "Brontephile". I have read all and taught most of the Bronte's novels and other writings, poems, letters, as well as books about them...

The picture clues were really helpful – as soon as I saw Day 9 EYRE, I thought – that's Haworth, and the moors!!! I made a pilgrimage to Haworth and Yorkshire, including to Ilkley Tarn, in 2010. Our last home was named Ilkley Tarn; the house sign was rescued from my husband's paternal grandfather's old timber Queenslander home when it was demolished! The clue for Day 39 WUTHERING HEIGHTS was one of the best crossword clues I have ever encountered! Day 5 for BRANWELL was great, too. Nutmeg's inclusion of clues like TENANTS at Day 32 (referencing "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" by Anne Bronte, such a progressive novel for its time) was sheer brilliance. I loved the previously unknown Maggie Thatcher story behind WILLIE at Day 38.

A million thanks to Nutmeg and Aramis for giving me so much enjoyment. Warm regards from Australia, JA

Very happy to finish this puzzle after running out of time and brainpower with the two previous ones. A pleasure to compete with throughout. I particularly like MULETAS, the clever hidden reversal of SANITARY and the crafty NEW YORK.

Thank you. MLJ

You may be interested to learn that Michael has broken a 3D Crosswords record. When our Rosie Posie, trusty PO Box collector, brought back the mail bag last week, it included a January solution! Well that beats the period when the PO Box moved from central to outlying Coventry.

So I looked at the front page and thought: He's forgotten to put on the preamble. Not even a note about clues in Alpha order, and it's Tramp - there's always a theme in a Tramp grid (I now realise the grid was probably by "etc").

Then I looked at the clues page and saw some asterisks against a clutch of clues and thought they would be odds-on favourites for theme clues.

Oh well. I expect the theme will out eventually. So I got stuck into solving

...

... the theme didn't stay hidden for long. About 5 mins when I got down to Day 16 where the anagram of the main man leapt out at me. Then I tackled the non-defined "starred" clues before any of the others because I had a host of Bernstein related ideas singing in my head

Thing is I didn't start this puzzle until a few days ago (near end of the month), and not long ago I had seen a Prom or two on BBC4 with plenty of Bernstein, and stuck m' West Side Story CD in the player when driving back from holiday in Devon down the A303 (Cool, huh!).

So the musical numbers fell out joyfully.

At the end I have only one question mark - on Day 19 which I have put in as Muletas - but I did not know this word, it seems to fit the implied def., and cannot understand the wordplay. AJR

Checking the printed calendar, the instructions are there but not on the website download. Apologies. Website files are made to be much smaller because of limiting times to download. Graphics are converted to bitmaps and reduced in resolution. Unwittingly this put the graphic in the top layer, obscuring the instructions I think. I need to watch out for this in future.

Here is my entry for August. Two answers are marked 'unsure' ... BIKKY which seems to work cryptically, but is not in Chambers ... and WEST SIDE STORY which must be right, but is alphabetically out of order. I haven't seen any notes or email about either of these answers, but perhaps I haven't looked properly ... or am I completely wrong?!

I very much enjoyed this very topical puzzle, learning more about the subject as always. I watched the On The Town prom on TV on Saturday and it was fabulous. JR

BIKKY should have had a yellow OED sticker. WWS out of order as noted. In 'normal' times we would have circulated a note after the first notification. See later item.

Favourite DETER with clever 'hidden'. Last in RUNOUT OF clever. Theme came relatively easily and, as ever, a few new words.MULETAS, WITED. DM

.....an easier solve than some this year (she says, boldly) and a more familiar theme for me.

On we go to your whirling dervish for September..... Jbn

... no problem with the theme, as there have been wall-to-wall celebrations of the centenary over the weekend ! The only hold-up for me was on the 6th, with an unfamiliar spelling. (Although it's not in Chambers, Oxford does have it) PM

Apologies. BIKKY should have had a yellow OED sticker.

Not too difficult even without any instructions.

6, BIKKY is not in Chambers

31 looks like it has an incorrect anagram?

33 TONIGHT = later? MJ

Tramp is being crafty here (as everywhere!). With checking letters and theme, it's got to be SOMEWHERE but how is it formed?

'Remarkable women getting present' (9) If 'remarkable' is an anagram signal then 'women' provides useful material bit not quite right.

But here 'Remarkable' = SOME, 'women' = W and 'present' = HERE

I enjoyed this one, being a fan of West Side Story. It seems very tame compared with many shows of today, but still thrills me - particularly the dance at the gym. Those were the days! DS

Very satisfying. After a brief sortie with the RAF we were brought back on track by Radio 3/BBC Proms. We particularly liked the doubles:

Tony/Tonight, Bernado/Bernstein, and Someday/Somewhere.

Sandheim would be pleased with the wordplay. J&JH

Yet another great solving experience. C&TH

Here is August - solved with the help of my new prize dictionary! PD

I solved CANDIDE and thought 'Aha, the theme is Voltaire!' then realised I was a couple of hundred years too early. PRELUDE, FUGUE AND RIFFS put me on the right track. MULETAS caused my brow to furrow most, and BIKKY my jaw to drop! All good fun. JT

I thought several of the clues were really clever, and some others had me stumped for a while !

Again (I'm afraid) I was disappointed to note quite so many snakes.

Unavoidable, regrettably, I daresay, when trying to incorporate so many thematic elements. And I doubt very very much that I could do even half as well as etc. However, as editor I think you really ought to draw the line at snakes that don't even join up, as evidenced by day 4 (43ba-2, 10d) and day 7 (43up, 4ba-3).

Incidentally, this month's crossword helped me with one of The Magpie's puzzles in their August edition - it used the same theme !!!! HE

As ever, I am most grateful for Hugh's thoughtful feedback and thankful for his forbearance with regard to snakes over virtually the entire period of the 3D Crossword experiment. Some solvers hate them. Some solvers love them. Most of our grids come from our solvers. We are experimental, trying things out, so feedback is very important to guide the direction we take. The brilliant etc grid was marked highly in the Tie-break Competition. The 'split snake' was a detractor. But overall the grid so good we had to use it. I am keen to advertise the post of editor. See later.

I have it in mind to set a puzzle one day entirely of snakes. This could be quite a challenge if set as a jigsaw. This would be similar to the challenge of the grid designer when facing a blank sheet of paper. And that gives me an idea of a 100% snake jigsaw puzzle with no grid supplied.

Blimey, Sirius - it was only when I saw your newsletter just now I remembered I had not sent my August entry!!! RE

Wonderful! Pity the 3rd musical couldn't be included in the grid." He thoroughly enjoyed it, and we have been playing all three of them on and off for the last fortnight, both DVD and CD versions. Fun! K&REB

I thought the centenary would be the RAF, particularly as the Red Arrows were behind the clues.

Leonard Bernstein deserves the recognition. Your alphabetical order slipped slightly - clue 41 should be before clue 39 HB

I don't know the length of the pipeline at The Magpie but etc would have submitted their grid in the Tie-break Competition winter of 2016. Great grid. And many thanks to etc for all the hard work and creativity.

The theme came quickly, with CANDIDE. I'm reasonably up to speed with Bernstein's works, so this led to a lot of write-ins; not quite the full PRELUDE FUGUE AND RIFFS, but pretty close. Enjoyable nevertheless, and I'm still humming the tunes.

(Alas, etc didn't include the Chichester Psalms, commissioned for performance in the cathedral in 1965.)

I wasn't quite sure about the rationale behind the Red Arrows pic, unless it was in recognition of the Biggin Hill air show each August. A couple of years ago, I led a group on a walk in that area on (unknowingly) the air show day. My route included a wheat field half-demarcated by incident tape which one was not to cross - it was the crash zone; but for us, it gave the best view possible of the pilots' remarkable feats of flying. PA

Some difficult words and tricky clueing. Enjoyed solving this one very much.

Plenty of thematics ingeniously smuggled in. Would have liked to have seen Chichester Psalms – you don't easily forget struggling to sing seven to the bar in Hebrew!

I hear it now:

dum dum da da da

dum dum da da da

Loved it. Looking forward to tackling your fiendish-looking round one. I always love it when there's a round puzzle for The Listener, though I rarely finish... I hope six weeks will be enough! AC

Herewith August's puzzle attached. Yipee, I've managed another one! Lovely puzzle, thank you. I was led astray by The Red Arrows initially then discovered a very different centenary! JJ

We have run some very beautiful, exciting and innovative puzzles this year but they have been rather tricky. Jill reported in March

I've got the Twitter account going - much confusion and a full ashtray, but it's the best I can do right now. Called Nit Twits. Could you please have a look at it? Go into Twitter and search @3Dnittwits.

2. Augustl 2018 Clues & Exp[lanations

		08 AUG 2018 TRAMP BERNSTEIN	Clues for the subject of the puzzle and his work are not defined
		Noting the centenary of a birth. Clues for the subject of the puzzle and associated works are not defined. Clues are presented in alphabetical order of their solutions.	
Solution	No.	Direction, Clue, Count	Clue Explanation
AMERICA	1	11d* Pickles a man endlessly eats (7)	ERIC in {A MA(n)}
ANITA	2	18ba-5 Girl and fool amongst group of drinkers (5)	NIT in AA
ARRESTEE	3	37aw-2,39up In US one caught Easter broadcast about religious subject (8)	EASTER* areound RE
BEDSPREAD	4	43ba-2,10d Bottom on pages of magazine and cover (9)	BED+SPREAD
BERNARDO	5	43ba,41to-2 Facial hair covering sailors and old Spanish man (8)	(BEARD around RN)+O
BIKKY	6	43to Sweet thing in half of swimming costume needing lubrication (5)	BIK(ini)+KY
BUCKET LIST	7	43up,4ba-3 Things still to do in this rain? Tip (6,4)	BUCKET+LIST
CANDIDE	8	33ba* John took tablet (7)	CAN+DID E
CROP	9	33to-4 Credit work in collection (4)	CR+OP
DETER	10	36aw Does time inside, gets put off (5)	DEER around T

DOTES	11	41to 1s affectionate in party scene for swinging (5)	DO <SET ("swing" can mean "to turn around")
DUSKNESS	12	36up,3aw-2 Regularly dour UK resort, missing eg twilight (8)	D(o)U(r)+SK(eg)NESS
FULL STOP	13	27ac,29aw-2 Point in busy street with no parking (4,4)	FULL+ST+O+P
I FEEL PRETTY	14	31to,24ac-3,25to-3,21ba-2* Kinky fertile type (1,4,6)	FERTILETYPE*
KITE	15	40ba-4 Tackle English winger (4)	KIT+E
LEONARD BERNSTEIN	16	13ba,43ba-4, 28aw* On breadline — rent's going out (7,9)	ONBREADLINERENTS*
LINED	17	13to Provided backing for Led Zeppelin's final two cuts (5)	LED around (zepell)IN
MARIA	18	35aw* Start to mix song (5)	M+ARIA
MULETAS	19	35up Bull in the middle ran into traps: like these? (7)	{MET around (b)UL(l)}+AS
NEW YORK	20	9d Place different end on yardstick? (3,4)	NEW + Y OR K
ON THE TOWN	21	14d-2,6ac* When not to hit? (2,3,4)	WHENNOTTO*
OVEREAT	22	8d Bit on the side, no starter, each model put away too much (7)	(l)OVER+EA+T
OVEREGG	23	30ba Go too far? Unwanted one gets laid (7)	OVER+EGG
PRELUDE, FUGUE AND RIFFS	24	24ac,27aw,32ba-3,16d* Suffered: painful — urged to get treatment (7,5,3,5)	SUFFEREDPAINFULURGED*
RIFF	25	16d-4 Queen with one loud bit of music (4)	R+I+FF
RUN OUT OF	26	42up,12to-2 Got no right: French one on holiday round France (3,3,2)	R+UN+OUT+O+F

RUN-UP	27	16aw Approach game: in the lead having captured knight (3-2)	RU+UP around N
SANITARY	28	19ba,16up-2 Flipping Norway rat in a sewer: part of it is clean (8)	Hidden reversal
SHEBA	29	2aw Race once Coe goes around hot athlete in the lead (5)	{SEB around H}+A
SOMEDAY	30	34ac Backing shows? Yes, eventually (7)	<DEMOS+AY
SOMEWHERE	31	34ac-4, 23ba-3, 22d-3* Remarkable women getting present (9)	SOME+W+HERE
SOWSE	32	19aw Shakespeare's to get drunk, hence, wife gets endless sex (5)	SO+W+SE(x)
TONIGHT	33	6d* Stretched nurses working later (7)	ON in TIGHT
TONY	34	6d-3, 20ac-2 Model hugging northern bloke (4)	TOY around N
TOSS	35	7ac-2, 8to Fastened smalls as shy (4)	TO+SS
TOTTER	36	17aw, 25ba-2 Stagger as temperature too much: give me a second (6)	T+OTT+ER
TUREEN	37	15d-2, 26to Take top off puree and put into empty tin dish (6)	(p)UREE in T(i)N
TYRE	38	38ac-4 Piece of rubber to wear out, we hear (4)	Homophone
WHEATY	39	23ba-6 Review photograph: phone camera shot piccy, ultimately, that's grainy? (6)	Last letters
WITED	40	1aw Marry without sex — local blamed (5)	WED around IT
WEST SIDE STORY	41	1ac, 5d* A point (blue team's first) (4,4,5)	WEST+SIDE'S+TORY

3. Play review by William Shakespeare

Rain on the Penines. No chance of football for Robert and me. We played with toy cars, garages made of old cardboard boxes, marble runs and skittles. For a long time. With variations.

“Can we *perform* a play?” asked the precocious five year-old.

“Great idea! Let’s make a theatre and some puppets”

... and so it went on with much fun trying to make the puppets look like people we knew. ‘Puppet’ is rather a grand title for two bits of paper cellotaped around a finger with a funny face drawn on it. Grandma Chippy was a bit wonky but came to life with outrageous impersonations.

Then the cardboard theatre fell apart during one particularly boisterous battle scene and that’s when the magic happened. It was just messing about really. All the prepared scenery and quick-change costumes for the puppets sort of got mixed up with pieces of dialogue and improvisation from one scene merged with script from another. It was a jumble that made perfect sense. It should have been a complete pickle but Robert absolutely got it.

Weather improved, theatrical disaster area cleaned up, multi-dimensional performance forgotten, in a collage of tennis, dog-walks and ice-cream.

I couldn’t stop thinking about our play. I had been a theatre-goer for decades seeing productions from traditional to avant garde, simple representations to the most impenetrable. But nothing came close to that riot with Robert. So much freedom, like a Picasso, a kind of dramatic cubism. Yet one requiring a kind of discipline following a different partial set of rules.

I wrote it all up in something of a fever working it forwards, backwards and inside out till it was perfect. I thought about seeking an opinion, a reaction to it. I thought I would start at the very top. I managed to get an interview with William Shakespeare. He read it! Wow! But then he said (very kindly):

“I’m afraid the news is not good Eric. I only understood three of twenty-seven scenes. Nothing else made sense to me. I don’t really like difficult plays.”

I worked all night on an explanation for how everything fitted together.

‘William’ (! Imagine !!) sent a letter in answer:

“Ah-ha! I see now. **Your playwriting is pretty good.**”

4. Araucaria plaque unveiling Somersham



Kings College Cambridge where John Graham read Theology

Item 4 with Shakespeare reviewing a Sirius play is a fantasy. Imagine the top playwright in the English language not only being prepared to look at your work and to judge that it was pretty good and then goes on to write the first scene of the your next play ... well that would be incredible.

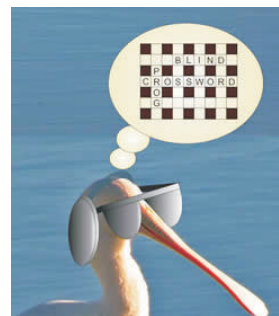
But that is exactly what happened if you switch ‘play’ for ‘3D crossword’, and Shakespeare for Araucaria. He wrote the foreword for the website and the clues for our first BBC Children in Need Appeal 3D Puzzle Calendar. Wow!



Araucaria went on to write more clues for us until he started offering personalised crosswords (on a website!!) in exchange for charitable donations. Araucaria showed interest in and offered support for work done with Ian Humphreys in Perth, Western Australia, which produced the first computer program enabling a totally blind crossword solvers to access crosswords independently. John gave us permission to use any of his 1ac puzzles for blind solvers. I was proud to represent 3D solvers and RNIB at the memorial service and again at the service unveiling a plaque in John’s church in Somersham.

Enigmatist insisted that the print size for Araucaria be large and at the top to catch the prospective solver’s eye. As a boy, Enigmatist wrote to John Graham who was very happy to nurture such a brilliant young talent. John Henderson would become the youngest Guardian crossword compiler and the strong relationship of sorcerer and apprentice grew.

Free Blind Gamers Crossword Pyuzzle (Spoonbill Software)



A Service of Dedication of a Plaque

In Memory of The Reverend John Galbraith Graham MBE

'ARAUCARIA'



16 February 1921 – 26 November 2013

The Service will be lead by

The Revd Sue Simpson, Rector

Preacher: The Rt Revd Dr David Thompson, Bishop of Huntingdon

Wednesday 29th August 2018, 2.30pm

St John the Baptist Church, Somersham

David Thomson, keen crossword (including our 3D puzzles) and Bishop of Huntingdon, gave warm tribute to his old friend. He made a link between the 'Aha!' moment in solving a crossword and a similar experience, perhaps on a different scale, he hoped for on discovering Heaven.

The service was very well attended with family, friends, parishioners and several from the crossword community.

In Memory of
John Graham MBE
1921 – 2013
Priest in this Church
(1993 - 2013)
Also known as "Araucaria"
Crossword Compiler



Sirius with Jane Teather and Enigmatrist

1 Across crossword magazine was set up by Araucaria in an attempt to satisfy Araucaria crossword solvers wanting more of the great man's work. It is a thriving publication with puzzles from established setters and emerging ones alike. Alas no Araucaria to produce current puzzles, but the archive is so huge and they still seem as fresh as when first compiled. You can always buy a book of crosswords by a favourite setter. Mrs Sirius and I like the idea of solving an Araucaria along with hundreds of other 1 Across members.

For subscription queries and general matters, you can contact Christine Jones. You can write to her at The Old Chapel, Middleton Tyas, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 6PP.

<https://www.1across.co.uk/contact-us/>



Sirius and Hugh Stephenson, Crossword Editor of The Guardian

Sirius is not very well. You only need to look at the photographs. Difficult to tell with aliens of course. But even ET didn't look that bad.

At some point we are going to have to let him go. We don't actually need him any more. A lot of the spadework setting up the project has been done. There are plenty of creative minds amongst setters and solvers .

Stresses are supposed to be kept to a minimum. No travelling to backgammon tournaments anymore - too exciting. No season ticket to watch the mighty Sky Blues of Coventry City - too unexciting. If they won a corner, Sirius would probably have a heart attack. Cricket's mainly OK if he is driven there and winched into position.

It is not possible to produce a printed calendar this year. We have already finished ten of the puzzles for 2019 with the last two in advanced stages. The plan is to operate on the internet (and by post for those who do not use computers). The complete set of twelve monthly 3D crosswords will appear on the website before the start of the New Year.

We are looking to expand the team to run the project in case Sirius collapses, if people want to keep things going. To this end we have a working document that describes the project. We will be looking for people interested to take over some more of the jobs.

A working document entitled
The 3D Crossword Calendar Puzzles Project is attached

The following suggestions are just that. Some might be interested if the task was shared with someone else. Others might like to take on more than one.

Crossword Editor works with The Puzzle Testers and liaises with The Setters. She/he may update draft puzzle files or give amended drafts to The Page Editors. Selects grid designs, invites setters.

(Deputy) **Project Director** has oversight of all aspects of the project. She/he can 'sit next to Nellie' (Sirius) or just take over.

Proofreader: Currently Puck **website manager:** currently Jolt

Examiner - Solution Marking: currently Nora Boswell World Champion 2010

Sales **Contracts & Financial Records**

email Sirius to arrange to discuss any of the above. Please if it's fun.



Sirius and Frank Paul Indigo Coffee House Cambridge Aug 2018
Photography by Ella

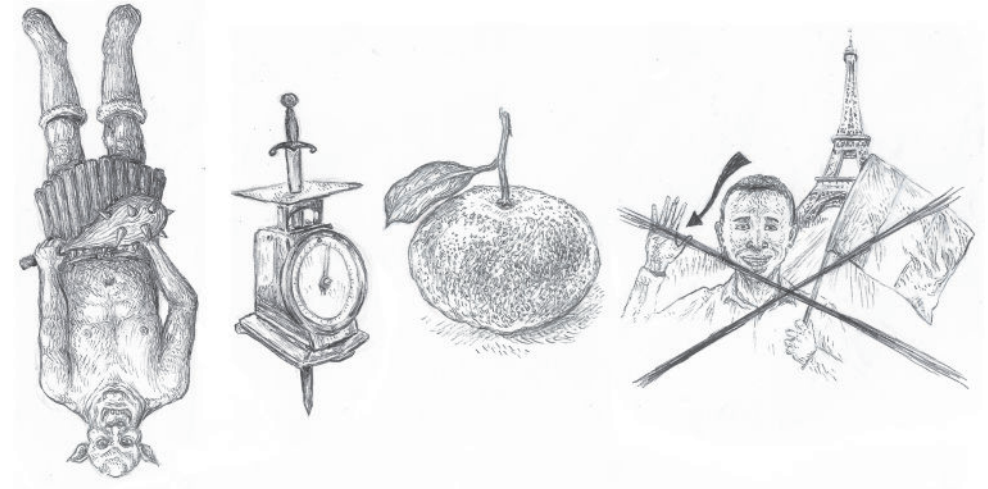
It was a great pleasure to meet up with Frank Paul, surrealist artist and author of 'The Cryptic Pub Quiz' and to thank Frank in person for a number of fantastic drawings he has produced for the 3D Crossword series 2019. We are on schedule to have a cryptic drawing for one of the clues each month.

I was first introduced to Frank by Jane Teather, wife of Enigmatist, after she had viewed artwork by Frank at an exhibition. "Intricate, surreal, fascinating and quirky" said Jane "I thought of the 3D Crosswords straightaway!"

Frank organises a renowned pub quiz at 'The Mill' in Cambridge and once a week walks across Midsummer Common clutching a set of fiendish quiz questions to amaze his flourishing audience.

Enigmatist, also a quizmaster of great renown, had enjoyed Frank's company the previous evening. John, a connoisseur of fine ales reported that he had never known anyone drink so much ... apple juice.

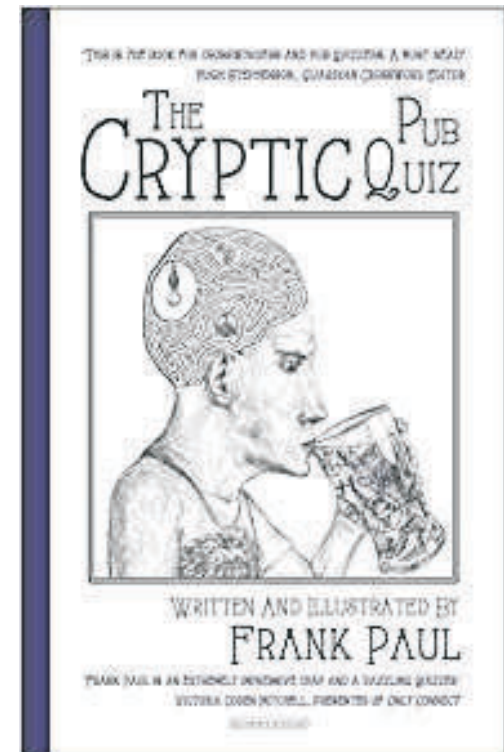
We are most fortunate to have such a brilliant artist and creative thinker as our illustrator. Thank you Frank for lending us your genius.



Something to whet the appetite (9,8)

I saw Frank's fabulous book in a CWC newsletter from Derek Harrison, last Christmas, or was it the GU Crossword column by Hugh Stephenson? Anyway I summoned strength and coppers to order a copy

I cannot take my eyes away from the wonderful drawings in this marvellous book. I wonder at the mind behind it as I wander round and around. Even if I don't solve the puzzle first time around, or the second or third, I still enjoy the journey. But when the puzzle is solved there is a very satisfying glow. Highly recommended and awarded as a prize this month. Sirius



6. RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning is closing

I love the Royal National Institute of Blind people. I see RNIB as a kind of extended family. I am a RNIB Member, volunteer Public Speaker and fundraiser. When I suffered sight loss I was in a kind of free-fall, but RNIB was there to help and I didn't hit the bottom. Instead I found all sorts of doors opening.

RNIB is a most worthy charity helping visually impaired people to go about a normal, independent life with a few adjustments. The range of services is incredible. RNIB challenges misconceptions, changes attitudes, conducts successful campaigns, gives practical advice and training eg media and accessibility - tv, mobile phones, computers - keeping your job, advising employers, advice on benefits, eye health, wide range of courses including emergency training for people with sudden sight loss, solutions for everyday life, forum structures, helpline, Talking Books and so on and so on.

RNIB is a huge organisation. I love it. It's like a family to me.

When somebody in your family does something dreadful, you might hate what they have done, but you don't stop loving them.

I received devastating news about RNIB Pears Centre and circulated the following: 4th September 2018. I have been writing and re-writing this since.

Hello Everyone,

John Darch, Chair of RNIB Pears Centre Fundraising Group, called here midday after his group meeting this morning with RNIB officials. John was told that The Centre would be closing down later this year.

John had made me aware earlier in the year that RNIB Pears Centre had lost its 'Outstanding' status with Ofsted and was found to be requiring improvement. But the news this morning is devastating - devastating for the youngsters, their parents, and scores of dedicated staff.

Six months ago RNIB Pears Centre failed on Safeguarding which is the most basic and important set of policies and demonstrable practice for any institution involving young people. Six months later they failed again. A statement appeared later in the day on the RNIB website.

Post date:

Tuesday, 4 September 2018

Eleanor Southwood, Chair of RNIB has issued a statement about RNIB Pears Centre.

Today, I am sharing the news that we have made the difficult decision to close RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning in Coventry, Warwickshire. As you may be aware, earlier this year one of our regulating bodies Ofsted raised significant concerns about the way we were managing the centre. We have worked really hard to turn the service around but unfortunately, we have not been able to satisfy them that we have made adequate progress. Both the children's home and school will close on 7 November 2018.

The children and young people at the centre are our number one priority; they deserve the very best care and support. We've worked hard to put things right but we accept that we're not the right organisation to be running this highly specialised service for children and young people with complex health needs.

We're committed to doing everything we can to make sure the children get the support they need to move to their new homes and schools. We have a dedicated team in place to help the transition process run as smoothly as possible.

Our colleagues have worked incredibly hard to make improvements at the centre, we're grateful for everything they've done and thank them for their dedication and commitment.

I'm saddened to share this news with you yet I am confident this is the right decision, for the children, for RNIB and for the wider community we are here to support.

As we reflect on 150 years of RNIB we have to look to the future. We must focus on the things we do best in order to support blind and partially sighted people for many years to come.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support of RNIB.

(Eleanor Southwood, Chair of RNIB)

Eleanor was interviewed by Peter White on Radio Four's *In Touch* Tuesday 4th September in the evening. A podcast is available, It is woeful.

In the last two to three years there have been significant changes in management and leadership at The Centre and within RNIB, against a background of financial stringency, and major policy changes. The above shows a catastrophic management failure to maintain excellence and a lack of competent determination to solve problems when they arose.

I received two letters from RNIB yesterday Thurs 13th Sept 2018 - one reproduced here and the other on the next page. I am happy to share these because we share our project and the letters are therefore written to all of us.



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12 Wilsons Lane
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6th September 2018

Dear Eric

Subject: RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning in Coventry

You will no doubt have heard the news from John Darch that we have made the difficult decision to close RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning in Coventry. I know that the centre is one that you have been a supporter of for many years and I'm sure that you will be saddened by this news.

As you may be aware, we have experienced challenges at our service at the centre and the decision to close was only taken after careful consideration. The children there deserve the very best care and support and we're committed to doing everything

Royal National Institute of Blind People

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we can over the coming weeks to make sure the children get the support they need to move to their new homes and schools. Both the children's home and school will close [on the 7th of November 2018](#).

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of RNIB Pears Centre, to express our grateful thanks and appreciation for all of the support that you have given, particularly through the sale of your annual Calendar. If you would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Kim Taylor
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There is no point in being angry about The Centre closure. I feel a deep sadness. But we, you and me, all of the 3D Crosswords Project made a significant contribution to the foundation and development of something wonderful, world-class, recognised as Outstanding by Ofsted for youngsters and their parents in sore need. The letter below serves to remind me of one of a huge number of brilliant things going on in RNIB.



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Mr E Westbrook
12 Wilsons Lane
Longford
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2369
11 September 2018
Supporter Ref: 4150601

Dear Mr Westbrook,

Thank you so much for purchasing raffle tickets to the value of £30.00 for our Autumn 2018 raffle. You have been entered into the draw with a chance to win £10,000! The draw takes place on 28 September 2018.

Jake Coles, who you may have read about, is a 22-year-old university student who had a brain tumour which resulted in sight loss during his teen years.

RNIB was mentioned to Jake whilst he was recovering from a course of chemotherapy, which came at a point where Jake and his family were feeling very shocked and alone. The Helpline was a real lifeline for him and his parents.

This is why our services are so invaluable and why we are so grateful for your support today. Thank you once again for your kind donation which provides such important support for blind and partially sighted people.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Crush
Head of RNIB Raffles and Lotteries

You can contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications by writing to Fundraising, RNIB, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE, by emailing fundraising@rnib.org.uk or calling us on 0345 345 0054.



Royal National Institute of Blind People

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Thank you so much for so many letters and emails of support to express a shared disappointment and then to urge the continuing of the 3D Crossword Project and raising funds for charities..

I remain fascinated by solving and setting flat crosswords and our 3D puzzles. How wonderful to sit down with Mrs Sirius to crack the Saturday Guardian or the Genius, over a coffee. I remain potty about puzzles. But I am passionate about people, particularly youngsters in education with special needs including visual impairment. So that passion for the success of RNIB Pears Centre has been inextricably linked with the 3D Crosswords. But take the passion away

The BBC CiNA involvement started in 2009 with a January Araucaria. At the end of this year 2018, December with a Puck. we will have completed ten years presenting over 130 3D puzzles raising funds for the two charities. And we have had some fun. We have developed a community and that aspect is very important.

Perhaps it's time to just stop. Or perhaps it's time for me to take a seat further back whilst you or some of you or others take the reins.

I am not able to sell a 2019 virtual calendar if I cannot guarantee the competition year for solvers.

But we have plenty of talent, oodles of it! So many brilliant minds and creativity. So let's do it. We have raised the funds to cover running costs. The principal task is to see the project through 2019, using all the work put in on the draft puzzles and then to review the position. I can be in the background to advise.

Or, we just stop. Either way, I will sleep soundly.

Finally, thank you for supporting our project to help youngsters in need.

Best wishes Eric Westbrook

Registered Blind RNIB Member & Public Speaker

3D Crossword Designer *Sirius*
Software development for independent blind crossword solving