



Hello All

As lockdown is easing, u3a groups are slowly opening up again and we gradually get more freedom to go out and about and meet friends and family, it is time for "On the Bright Side" to bid you farewell. Over the coming months there will be a need to provide information and support to get groups going again after such a long break; there will be holidays, day trips and hopefully concert and theatre trips to advertise too, as well as reports from members on what has gone well so far. The usual vehicle for this is the Newsletter and we're pleased to say that it will be making a welcome return in June. Please send any contributions asap to:

**[newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk)**

Bob, John & Sue



Image: NobleWorksCards.com

Following the recent death of her husband Martin Preston, Sue would like to say thank you to the many kind members of the u3a who sent their expressions of sympathy and for the many cards she has received.

## Ground elder gastronomy or simply getting your own back!

As the days get longer and you see more growth in your garden, I thought some of you might appreciate some ideas of what to do if, like me, yet again, you see the green shoots of ground elder raising their heads.

We have lived with this plant in our garden for years, tried, unsuccessfully, all sorts of laborious methods for eradicating it, and finally, last year, in lockdown, decided to view it differently. If you can't change something, change the way you react to it!

There are various websites for anyone googling. These are my adaptations of recipes made freely available. My thanks to those foragers who invited me to use ground elder positively.

### Ground elder soup:

Sauté a finely chopped onion in olive oil until softened, and beginning to caramelize.

Optional: thicken it by stirring in a spoonful of flour (I don't bother with this.)

Chop up a big handful of well-washed ground elder and wilt in a pan with a knob of butter or olive oil for about 5 minutes

To the caramelised onion, add stock - vegetable /chicken / ham – a cube if you have to, but this is ideal for using up the water in which you've just cooked your dinner's vegetables, and really excellent if you have just cooked a gammon and have a pan full of the juice-filled water. Stir, and add the wilted ground elder to the stock & onions.

Season to taste: some salt and pepper, perhaps a little turmeric or cumin, and I really like a little mace or nutmeg.

Simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Putting it in the blender midway through the last stage gets a smoother texture.

Taste - check the seasoning is as you like it. Add more liquid if needed. You could add some milk at this stage, either stirred in, or with a little swirl of cream or yoghurt on top when it's in the bowl.

Serve and enjoy!



## Pesto

A handful of young washed ground elder leaves & stalks,  
toasted pine nuts – or I have seen a recipe with pistachio nuts  
and some grated parmesan cheese

2 cloves of garlic

Some good olive oil

Seasoning: salt, black pepper

Blend all of the ingredients apart from the olive oil in a food processor until you have a dark green thick paste.

Dribble in olive oil until you are happy with the consistency.

Season to taste.

Use this stirred through hot pasta just before serving as you add some butter and black pepper or spread some on hot toast and eat like a pâté, a squeeze of lemon is a nice addition.

## Simply

In a salad mixed with other leaves; the young leaves are best. Dress as you would like any salad, with oil, vinegar, mustard, lemon, mayonnaise . . .

Cooked like spinach, with lemon and black pepper added.

In a quiche filling with eggs, pepper, cheese . . .

In a Spanish omelette, added to the beaten egg and perhaps some cheese with whatever vegetables you want to use up that day, peppers, courgettes, mushrooms, potatoes, tomatoes . . .

**Growing Advice** If you have a patch of Ground Elder keep cutting it back and young fresh leaves will grow back in no time . The aim if you are eating it instead of trying to eradicate it, is to free up the other plants that are struggling for survival inside the patch of ground elder!

**Warning** from various websites: Once ground elder flowers it becomes a mild laxative, a diuretic and apparently has a soporific effect - unwise therefore to eat at this stage!

Just another one of the things the Romans gave us, It is listed on various sites as good for gout, arthritis, and rheumatic conditions. Other names include Goutweed, Herb Gerrard, Bishops Weed, and Aegopodium podagraria. I hope this makes you feel a little better about having it in your garden.

**Pam Golding**

## Are all Premier League Footballers spoilt brats?



Although I realise that is a sweeping generalisation, I used to think so. And then, earlier this year I saw a photograph on social media of Sadio Mane, (pronounced Mannay – it's French) a Liverpool player. He was being ridiculed for having a phone with a cracked screen. Why didn't he just buy a new one? One person pointed out that Sadio gave a lot of his money away (and he earns a LOT) to charity so I decided to find out more.

Sadio Mane was born in 1992, the son of an imam in the extremely poor village of Bambali in Southern Senegal. A gifted player from an early age, his family, however, was very much against him becoming a footballer. When his father fell ill there was no hospital within hours of the village and sadly his father passed away – something that influenced his later charity work. Life for the seven year old, which had always been hard, now grew even harder. With no shoes and no football, he would practice for hours in the dirt, barefooted and using an unripe grapefruit. His dream never faded and faced with much opposition from his family, he ran away from home aged 16 and made his way to Dakar, having to talk his way across the Gambia border en route, with no passport and little money. There he joined the Senegalese Football Academy and his career was launched. Sadio became a professional player in 2012, played for his country that year and still does. He was named African Player of the Year in January 2020. He eventually joined Liverpool in 2016 where his salary is now £100,000 per week. I should point out that although this is an extraordinary amount of money it is only half of Liverpool's top earner.

So what does he do with all that money? He has said in interviews "Why do I need six gold watches or four Ferraris? What good is that to me or the world?"



Well, he built a hospital in his home village, a school and a football stadium and gives €70 a month to poor families in his old neighbourhood. He says “I remember being hungry all the time, having no shoes and having to work in the fields from a young age. I want to share with my people what I’ve been lucky enough to have”. Sadio recently donated a large amount of money to the Senegal fight against Coronavirus.

He is known as one of the ‘good guys’ of football – a team player, humble, approachable and generous. He can also be found cleaning the toilets at the local mosque in Liverpool. Back in Bambali he has hero status and local children dream of following in his footsteps and becoming professional footballers, but he has a message for them – “Get an education first and then anything is possible”.

There are probably a great many highly-paid footballers who are as generous as Sadio but few have captured the imagination like him. Although, maybe next time I’ll write about George Weah who played for Arsenal and is now President of Liberia. Watch this space . . .

**Irene Aldridge**

## **The Peace of Wild Things**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

**Wendell Berry**

**Wendell Erdman Berry** (born August 5, 1934) is an American novelist and poet. A farmer, he is also an environmental activist, and cultural critic. In 2015, he became the first living writer to be inducted into the Kentucky Writers Hall of Fame.

**Lesley Basu**

## Easy Vegetable Tarte Tatin

There are dozens of different versions on the internet but this one is all mine!

### Ingredients:

1 sheet ready rolled puff pastry

1 medium onion

Any vegetables you have left in the fridge – the more colourful the better. I used carrots, parsnip, sweet potato, red and green pepper and mushrooms – thinly sliced.

Thyme, rosemary and sage, olive oil

Grated cheese if using (I use nutritional yeast to make it vegan)



### For the glaze:

Tablespoon vegetable spread or butter if you're that way inclined

1 tablespoon sugar, brown for preference

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon water

1 dessertspoon balsamic vinegar or white/red wine vinegar

### Method

Heat oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan or gas mark 6). Toss sliced vegetables in olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in the middle of the oven for 20/30 minutes until golden and caramelised.

Meanwhile, make the glaze. Melt spread and olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat and stir in sugar and water. Keep stirring until all sugar has dissolved and mixture turns golden (5-6 minutes). Remove from heat and stir in vinegar.

Using a round pie pan as a template, cut out a circle slightly bigger than the pan. Coat the bottom and sides of the pie pan with the glaze.

Scatter the herbs on top.

Arrange the roasted vegetable on top, as artistically as you can. If using, scatter grated cheese on top. Place the cut pastry on top and tuck in around the sides. Prick the pastry with a fork and bake the pie in the oven at 180 degrees for 40 – 45 minutes until the top is golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for a few minutes before placing a serving plate on top and inverting the tart quickly. Be careful – it will still be very hot!

Delicious hot or cold. Enjoy!

Image Emandal

**Irene Aldridge**

## Insects and Bees

Recently I have had more time to sit on our garden bench and drift back in time to my childhood. I could see me then in a garden somewhere, searching the soil for beetles, snails, worms, and when I'd lift my head up to the sky I used to marvel at the tufts of dandelion rising with the breeze, swirling oh so gently on their journey to nowhere.

Today I sat on the bench and watched. What had been intriguing me were the antics of bees.



These bees were behaving in a similar pattern for some days now, so I decided to find out a little about them. My research told me that they are known as digger bees, or ground bees. Goodness, where have I been all this time and never encountered these little creatures before.

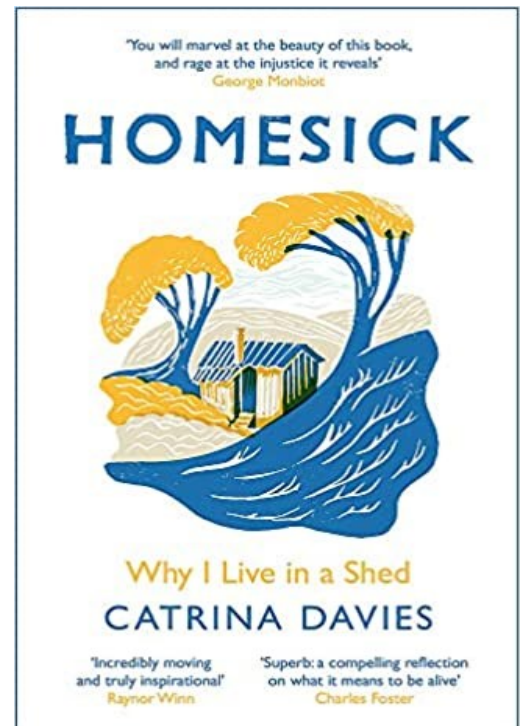
I had watched a bee come close, probably not intentionally, more in search, and once it had found what it was looking for it would suddenly start burrowing into the tufts of grass, until it disappeared. So I watched for it to come back up again, but whilst I had sat there it hadn't. We are told that the queen bee lives underground and is responsible there for keeping her eye on her children safely surrounded with pollen and nectar. The male bee is responsible for rushing about above deck, so to speak, collecting the pollen, friends, and any other necessities. And to top it all they are not just below the surface as I had first thought and which had made me wary of treading on the grass in case I was breaking someone's neck. They actually dig themselves at least 6" down, so quite a safe distance.

The bees are apparently no threat to us unless we upset them. The other plus about them is that we do need them to keep our gardens healthy and pollinated. However, come a good splash of rain for a couple of days and these new found friends are gone along with the spring.

## Book review from a confirmed bookworm.

### Homesick / Why I Live in a Shed by Catrina Davies.

For me a good book should grip you within a few pages and should make me cry and also laugh out loud. A recent read was close to my own heart; a true ongoing story set in the depths of Cornwall where I lived for 10 years prior to moving back to this area. It first came to my attention on a Simon Reeve programme about Devon and Cornwall, where a very reticent Catrina spoke to Simon for a few minutes but it sparked my interest and when it came up in my Kindle reads, of course I had to read it.



This is the story of a personal housing crisis that led to the discovery of a true home. The story starts in Bristol with Catrina living in a box room that, although she pays an extortionate amount of rent for each month, should not have been sublet to her. At every inspection by the letting agent it has to be vacated, leaving not a trace she had been there. Deciding it just was not worth all the aggro and that it was time to go back to the area where her family live, the place she called home, but where to live when she gets there? Her parents are no longer together, and neither her mother nor sister are in a position to offer her a permanent home. She remembers the shed her father used as an office for a number of years. Set on a small piece of land, she had stayed there for a few nights previously. Knowing where the key was hidden she put the very rusty key in the lock and she was in! So starts her story of kindness and downright unfairness. The start of a very moving ongoing story of someone trying to live her life frugally without harming the environment around her.

Homesick was published by riverrun and is available on Kindle, in paperback and as an audiobook.

**Lesley Taylor**



## Opening Lines

Some of these sound very familiar, but where do they come from?

### Songs & Soundtracks

1. And did those feet, in ancient times
2. Michael Rennie was ill the day the earth stood still
3. Way, way back many centuries ago, not long after the Bible began
4. Now I've had the time of my life
5. Voulez-vous coucher avec moi, ce soir?



### Books & Plays



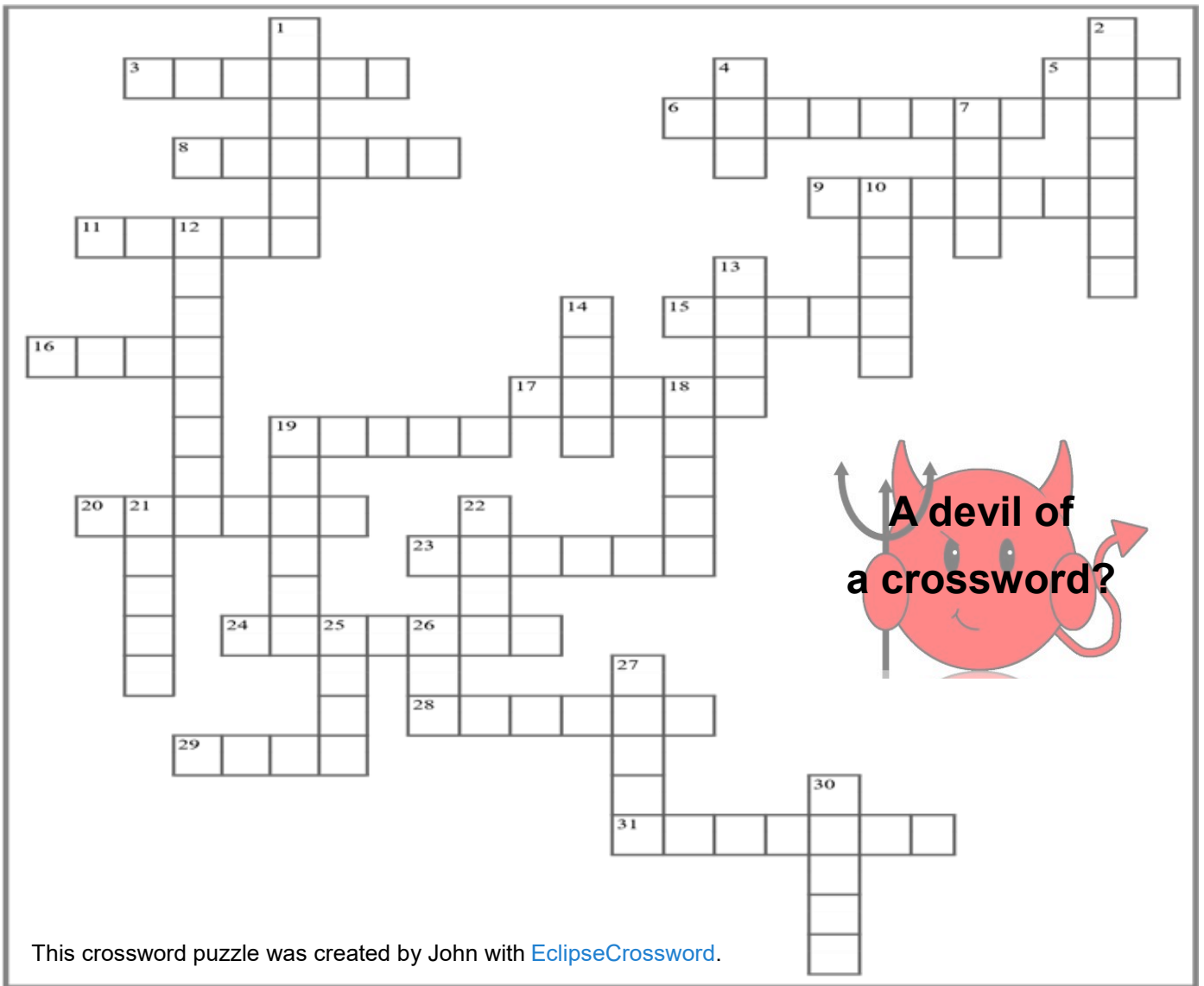
6. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times
7. Two household, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona where we lay our scene
8. It is a truth, universally known, that a single man in possession of good fortune is in want of a wife
9. When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow
10. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad



### Films

11. A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away
12. Whenever I get gloomy with the state of the world, I think about the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport
13. Rosebud
14. Whoa, there! (clip-clopping of coconut shells before and after)
15. Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family

**Pauline van der Sanden**



**Across**

- 3 A colour
- 5 Nocturnal creature
- 6 Inmate
- 8 Place of worship
- 9 Branch of maths
- 11 Clumsy
- 15 Timepiece
- 16 A fruit
- 17 The devil
- 19 Everyday
- 20 Nab

- 23 Male name
- 24 Looking graceful
- 28 Kitchen appliance
- 29 Summer month
- 31 Valour

**Down**

- 1 Show off
- 2 Engage in
- 4 Sob
- 7 Flat

- 10 Supple
- 12 Appraiser
- 13 Outbuilding
- 14 Fragile
- 18 Look the same
- 19 Murky
- 21 Percentage
- 22 Nasty
- 25 Nervous
- 26 Inquire
- 27 Ascent
- 30 Warehouse





Can you find the 10 differences between these 2 pictures in a fiendish **Spot the Difference** created by **Rob Yeowell** from a photograph he took at the Chippenham Folk Festival a few years ago?





**This page has been left blank  
so that you avoid seeing the  
answers to the puzzles before  
you have done the puzzles.**

**Answers on next  
page.  
You have been  
warned!**



## Opening Lines - Answers

1 Jerusalem 2 The Rocky Horror Show 3 Joseph & the etc.  
4. Dirty Dancing 5 Moulin Rouge 6 Tale of Two Cities  
7 Romeo & Juliet 8 Pride & Prejudice 9 To Kill a Mockingbird  
10 The Merchant of Venice 11 Star Wars 12 Love Actually  
13 Citizen Kane 14 Monty Python & the Holy Grail 15 Trainspotting

## A devil of a crossword? - Answers

**Across** 3 violet/yellow 5 bat 6 prisoner 8 church 9 algebra  
11 inept 15 watch 16 plum 17 Satan 19 daily 20 arrest  
23 George 24 elegant 28 kettle 29 July 31 bravery

**Down** 1 flaunt 2 partake 4 cry 7 even 10 lithe 12 examiner  
13 barn 14 weak 18 alike 19 dismal 21 ratio 22 mean  
25 edgy 26 ask 27 climb 30 depot

## Did you Spot the 10 Differences?



Our apologies that “A Solution Full of Characters” in the March edition contained errors. Entirely the fault of the typist not John the setter! Use the contact details on the first page if you would like the correct solution.